FORUM

ENGLISH
TEACHING
FORUM
A JOURNAL
FOR THE TEACHER
OF ENGLISH
OUTSIDE THE
UNITED
STATES

forum a public meeting place for open discussion, a public meeting, or lecture, involving audience discussion, a medium (as a newspaper) of open discussion

Volume XX Number 1 January 1982 — *begun publication 1963*

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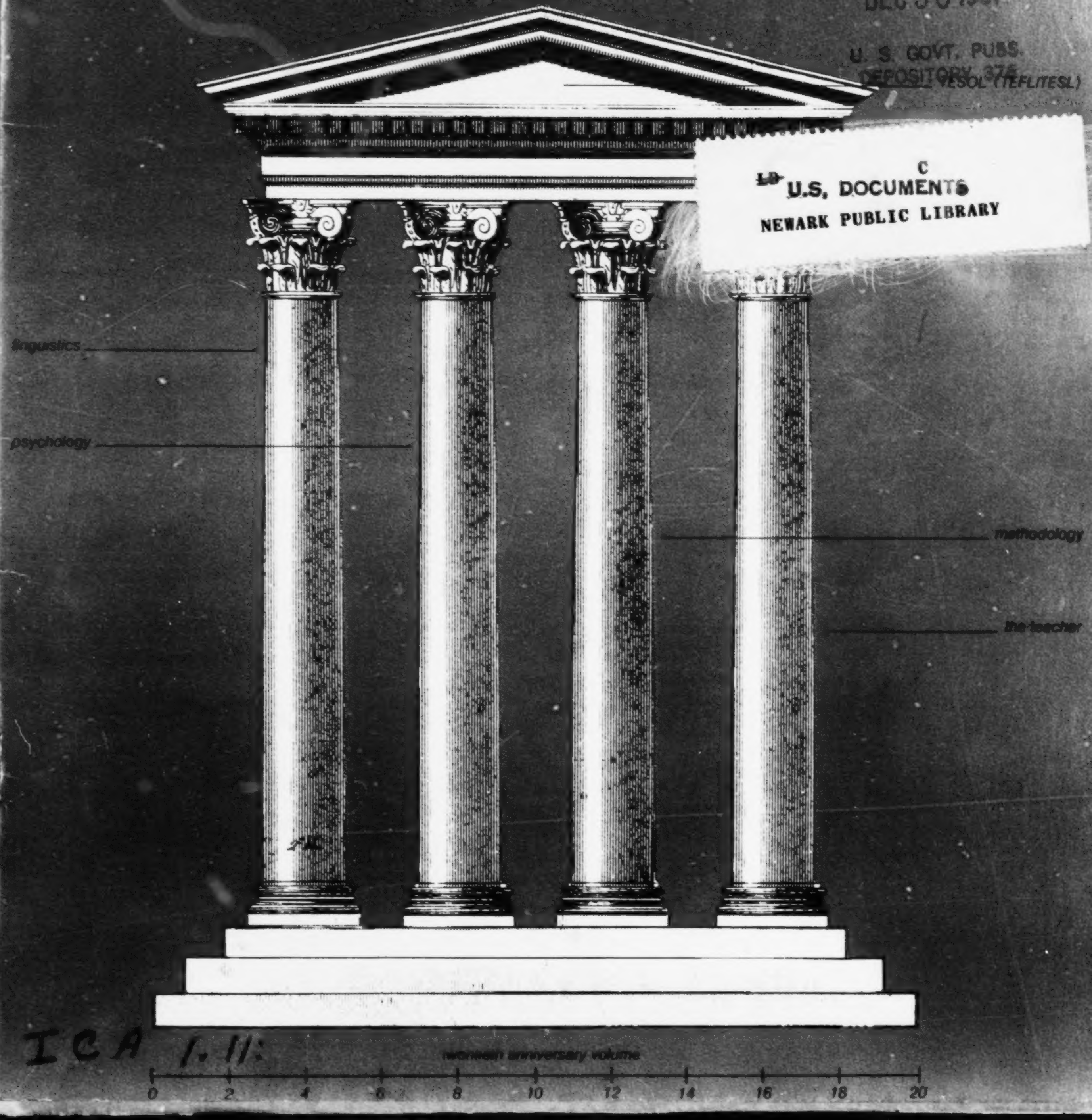

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Editorial

This issue marks the beginning of the FORUM's twentieth year. To celebrate this landmark, each of this year's four issues will feature an article on one of the "pillars" that have traditionally supported the teaching of English as a foreign language: linguistics, psychology, methodology (pedagogy), and—the teacher. For a retrospective and (insofar as possible) prospective view of the first three pillars, we have asked three colleagues—seasoned observers and active participants in the field during these twenty years—to share with us their thoughts on these three aspects of TESOL.

Our own experience, as well as the three articles received, informs us that these subjects are tightly intertwined. It has been obvious all along that our changing methodologies are in large part an outcome of changing views in linguistics and psychology. But these latter two disciplines have themselves moved in more or less parallel fashion during these "turbulent twenty years" (as Wayne Harsh aptly characterizes the period).

It is tempting, and perhaps instructive, to sit back for a moment and look through a wide "picture window" at this twenty-year panorama. Looking beyond the narrow confines of any or all of these disciplines, beyond even the changing view of what language is, or may be, we catch a glimpse of the evolving concepts of mind, man, and society that are reflected, or hinted at, in the changes we see in these subject areas. "No man is an island," wrote John Donne some three hundred years ago; neither is any discipline or field of study. An overview of the changing concepts in language teaching during the past twenty years can tell us a lot about the current state of that art, but it can also tell us much about our changing views of the world. It may be helpful to keep this larger view in mind while reading the particulars of change in each of the three fields discussed.

And what of the fourth "pillar"—the teacher? Saving the best for last, we shall reserve several pages in our October issue for messages from readers, as an appropriate culmination to our twenty-year celebration. Like a classroom without students, like language teaching without a language, so would be the FORUM without its teacher-readers and teacher-contributors. On this occasion, therefore, we extend a special invitation to our readers (see page 36 of this issue). We look forward to receiving the messages that you may write to your colleagues around the world, and will be pleased to print as many as we can in the space available.

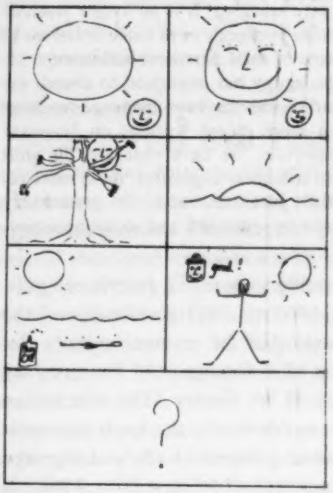
In addition to the feature articles mentioned for each issue, the July and October issues for this year will have a heavy concentration of articles on the teaching of reading, with a special emphasis in one of those issues on the reading of scientific and technical materials. We hope that these will help to meet a need for information and ideas on this subject of growing importance and urgency in many parts of the world.

—A.C.N.

OOPS! SORRY . . .

Our apologies to Louis G. Kelly for omitting 2,475 years of his 25 Centuries of Language Teaching in our October 1981 editorial. Time flies—but not that fast.

FORUM



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Volume XX
January 1982
Number 1

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Linguistics and TESOL: A Turbulent Twenty Years

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Most recently, as part of a distinguished career in the teaching of English and linguistics, WAYNE HARSH served as Director of the University of California Study Center at Hong Kong, where he was also guest professor at the Chinese University of Hong Kong. During his stint in Asia, Dr. Harsh lectured at universities and binational centers in Singapore, Indonesia, the Philippines, and Malaysia. He is the author of two books and of numerous articles and reviews, and a co-author of twenty texts for teaching English language, literature, and composition. He has been a Fulbright scholar in the Netherlands and twice served as Fulbright senior lecturer in Greece.

A history of the relationship between language study and language teaching during the last two decades could well be subtitled "Reformation and Counterreformation." That there has been a very close relationship, particularly in the teaching of English as a second language, is beyond question. That it has been stormy and filled with strife is even further beyond question. A recent publication concerned with the effects of research on education devotes seventy-eight comprehensive pages to "The Impact of the Language Sciences on Second-Language Education." The editors summarize their findings without equivocation:

> Over the past hundred years and particularly in recent decades, the developing language sciences have made an immense impact on all phases of language teaching. It is no longer possible to think or talk about language pedagogy or to make decisions in this field without taking note of their pervasive influence. . . . On the whole, language pedagogy has attempted to absorb the developing linguistic theories into its own language-teaching theories. Consequently, in more recent writings on language teaching and in course materials, we have observed the shift from traditional grammar to structural linguistics, then, more recently, to transformational grammar, and, in present-day thought, to the rising interest in semantics and sociolinguistics. [Stern et al. 1978]

In retrospect, it is interesting to note that four books published in the years from 1963 to 1965 foreshadowed the shifts in linguistic emphasis that the research editors describe. The second edition of *A Grammar of Present-Day English* (R.W. Pence and D.W. Emery, The Macmillan Company, 1963) sounded symbolically the knell for traditional schoolroom grammar. Robert Lado's *Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach* (McGraw-Hill, 1964) is probably the last assured and uncritical summary of the audiolingual method closely associated in second-language teaching with structural linguistics. *The Structure of Language: Readings in the Philosophy of Language*, also published in 1964 (Jerry A. Fodor and Jerrold J. Katz, Prentice-Hall), contained articles that were to give impetus to interests in semantics and psycholinguistics and the relationship of these subdisciplines to teaching English. And, certainly, Noam Chomsky's *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax*, published by the Massachusetts Institute of Technology Press in 1965, brought to an end the supremacy of the structural linguists, scholars whose theories on language and language learning Chomsky challenged not just as inadequate and incomplete but as "misconceived."

The use of religious metaphors in discussing the history of American linguistics is neither unique nor inappropriate. The *New Yorker* magazine, in a popularizing article on transformational grammar, referred to Chomsky's two major texts (*Syntactic Structures* and *Aspects*) as the Old Testament and the New Testament. Earlier, in the battles of the structuralists against determined defenders of traditional grammar, few evangelists could have spoken with more dogmatism or with greater righteousness. Not, that is, until the advent of Chomsky's disciples, who attacked structuralist beliefs with equal fervor and perhaps even greater zeal.

The intense partisanship, with its attendant overstatement and lack of objectivity, makes the task of assessing the role of linguistics in TESOL difficult. The magnitude of change in theoretical linguistics in the past quarter-century compounds this difficulty. The editors of the report on the impact of research on education speak in understatement when they state that "constant changes in theoretical interests, emphases, and formulations have . . . presented problems." It is, therefore, worthwhile to consider some of the major changes in the theories of language study and try to evaluate exactly what linguistics and linguistic-related disciplines have contributed that is of value in language teaching, or—more specifically—in TESOL.

The structuralist "reformation"

Consider first what might in a linguistics-TESOL history be called the Reformation: the application to language study and teaching of the theories and methods of structural or descriptive linguistics. For despite the criticisms that can be made of structural linguistics with regard to its inadequacy in fully describing language and for its reliance on the theoretical basis of behaviorist philosophy, the approach definitely changed forever the language scholar's notion of English grammar. To a generation trained to see language as a vaguely described system of human communication, the structuralist emphases on exact, verifiable descriptions and on the primacy of oral language came as a revelation. Similarly revolutionary were the structuralists' insistence on the unique patterns of each language and their condemnation of traditional grammar for what they saw as two glaring faults: (1) the attempts to make English grammar conform as closely as possible with that of classical languages; and (2) the concern with formulating "correct" rules (purism) based on and usually intended for written English.

Structuralists defined language as systematized combinations of sounds meaningful in a given cultural community and grammar as the set of formal patterns in which words of a language are arranged in order to convey larger meanings.

In analyzing these patterns, the structural (or descriptive) linguists proceeded from form to meaning, identifying first the meaningful minimal sounds (phonemes), then meaningful lexical or grammatical sound units (morphemes), and ultimately the larger units of phrases, clauses, and sentences (syntax). American structuralists, describing the unique patterns of English, stressed four major ways of signaling meaning: word order, word form, function words, and intonation patterns. They classified the parts of speech (or words) into the two major categories of form-class words and function words. Form-class words (nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs) carry the primary lexical information and inflect or change form to indicate grammatical meaning. Function words (noun determiners, auxiliary verb forms, subordinators, prepositions) have little or no lexical meaning, do not change in form, and are in closed classes, not borrowing or adding new words; function words are important in indicating structural relationships and grammatical meanings.[1]

As the brief description reveals, the structuralists could not, despite their determined efforts, avoid meaning, a component that linguists today insist is inherent in language, just as the structuralist definitions above indicate. Structuralists did, however, give a far more exact description of the English language than had existed before. And it was this description that shaped both the theory and methods of the teaching approach known during World War II military instruction as *mimicry-memorization* and, after additions in methodology and extension in usage during the 1950s and early 1960s, as the *audiolingual* method. Based on the behaviorist psychology theory that learning, including language acquisition, is a matter of conditioning—the formation of habits through responses to stimuli—the audiolingual method stressed mimicry and analogy. Students mimicked a "model" teacher and, through patterned drills based on analogy, learned the formal patterns of English. In contrast to such earlier methods as that of *grammar-translation*, the oral language was stressed. And, adapting techniques developed earlier in the *direct* method, teachers using the audiolingual method followed the four-skill sequence of understanding, speaking, reading, and writing.

The Chomskyan "counterrevolution"

Ironically, the hard-won triumph of structural or descriptive linguists over traditional prescriptive grammarians brought only a brief ascendancy. Even before departments of linguistics had been established in the more conservative colleges and universities of America and Europe, the new theory of transformational-generative grammar was questioning not just the linguistic adequacy but the basic tenets of structuralism. Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures* was published by Mouton Press in Holland in 1957. By the early sixties, Chomsky and his followers were dismissing structuralism as a mere exercise in taxonomy (distinguishing, classifying, and naming type groups within a subject field), an approach that was inadequate in explaining either how language "works" or how it is acquired. In the mid-sixties,

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[1] EDITOR'S NOTE: *Form-class words* are often called "content words"; *function words* are sometimes called "structure words." While the category of form-class words is capable of rather exact definition, function words are less neatly classified. In addition to the four main groups of function words listed here, linguists often include also: qualifiers (or "intensifiers"), coordinators, interrogators, and sentence-links, as well as a few other miscellaneous groups.

Chomsky criticized structuralism and its psychological basis as not merely inadequate but as misconceived. Regarding structuralist theory and practice, particularly the audio-lingual method of teaching, Chomsky stated in part:

> Linguists have had their share in perpetuating the myth that linguistic behavior is "habitual" and that a fixed stock of "patterns" is acquired through practice and used as the basis for "analogy." These views could be maintained only as long as grammatical description was sufficiently vague and imprecise. As soon as an attempt is made to give a careful and precise account of the rules of sentence formation, the rules of phonetic organization, or the rules of sound-meaning correspondence in a language, the inadequacy of such an approach becomes apparent. What is more, the fundamental concepts of linguistic description have been subjected to serious critique. [Chomsky 1966, pp. 43–49]

The counterrevolution had occurred. For Chomsky praised many of the theories of traditional grammar, stating that it, unfortunately, had not gone far enough. "It would not be inaccurate," he stated in 1966, "to regard the transformational models as a formalization of features implicit in traditional grammars. . . ." He was not, however, referring to the Latin-based traditional texts but to texts far more theoretical, those of philosophical grammar.

It is impossible to summarize briefly and adequately the theories and methods of transformational grammar. Chomsky himself best indicates something of its complexity, and something of its tremendous scope, discussing justification of grammars in *Aspects:*

> We thus make a fundamental distinction between *competence* (the speaker-hearer's knowledge of his language) and *performance* (the actual use of language in concrete situations). . . .
>
> A record of natural speech will show numerous false starts, deviations from rules, changes of plan in mid-course, and so on. The problem for the linguist, as well as for the child learning the language, is to determine from the data of performance the underlying system of rules that has been mastered by the speaker-hearer and that he puts to use in actual performance. Hence, in the technical sense, linguistic theory is mentalistic, since it is concerned with discovering a mental reality underlying actual behavior. Observed use of language or hypothesized dispositions to respond, habits, and so on, may provide evidence as to the nature of this mental reality, but surely cannot constitute the actual subject matter of linguistics, if this is to be a serious discipline. [Chomsky 1965, p.3]

This passage touches upon several major postulates of transformational theory and indicates that its theoretical basis is mentalism—a view that conscious processes as revealed by introspection are the proper data of psychology. Chomsky convincingly argues that every language user possesses two linguistic abilities: *competence*, the understanding of how language works, developed both biologically and by intuition; and *performance*, actual and observable use of language. Similarly, in describing or making explicit the system of language, Chomsky posits a surface structure (observable use of language) and an underlying, abstract *deep structure*, the knowledge of rules or patterns that each speaker must possess.

Rules of two types, expressed in notational symbols, describe the way a speaker gets from thought to language. Phrase-structure rules generate sentences in their basic forms, or "deep structures." (S→NP+VP=*Sentence* is rewritten as a *noun phrase* plus *verb phrase: John ed+wash the car*.) Transformational rules determine how thoughts about the sentence are finally expressed. They "turn" the "deep structures" into "surface structures" and account for the specific syntactic patterns a speaker may use—passive, negative, question, imperative, and so forth—to give such surface structures as *John washed the car, The car was washed by John, John didn't wash the car, Did John wash the car?*, and *John, wash the car*. Knowing the lexicon and knowing the underlying rules of a language, a speaker can add to, delete from, rearrange, or combine base sentences to get infinite variety from finite means. To the components of phonology, morphology, and syntax, transformationalists add the major component of semantics, which assigns meaning and which reveals as ungrammatical (or unacceptable) such sentences as *_He elapsed_, or *_The tree was angry_. For, ideally, a complete transformational grammar would generate (or give rules of substitution) for all and only the grammatical sentences of a given language. In addition, transformationalists have revived the idea of universal grammar but in a very different sense from the old idea of a "perfect" universal language of which modern languages are but degenerate copies. To the transformationalist, universals are found in deep structure, in sound-meaning relationships, and in semantics. As Chomsky states (*Aspects*, p. 30), "The existence of deep-seated formal universals . . . implies that all languages are cut to the same pattern, but does not imply that there is any point-by-point correspondence between particular languages."

This capsule description suggests only a few of the theories and methods that are subsumed under transformational grammar. In addition are the numerous related concepts in psycholinguistics, a field stimulated dramatically in the past two decades in large part by Chomsky's reviving the mentalistic or rational notions of the philosophical grammarians who, from the seventeenth century, have worked in an approach to language study that was previously little noted. To add yet new linguistic concepts seems almost to lead to an embarrassment of riches. But it is impossible for the language scholar or the language teacher to ignore yet another subdiscipline that has greatly affected language study in general—that of sociolinguistics. Described by Dwight Bolinger in the 1975 foreword of his *Aspects of Language* as "the most active—one might say the most combative—field within linguistics since the late 1960s," sociolinguistics promises to have considerable effect on TESOL once its theories have produced more than the slogans *notional* and/or *communicative* and a very tentative framework. Finally (since it is necessary to limit consideration of contributing disciplines to the most influential ones), there is the concept of the speech act, a theory that involves scholars in sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. Particularly important in the development of notional and communicative syllabuses, the theory was first promoted by J. Austin in 1962 (*How to Do Things with Words*, Oxford University Press). Its concerns are the functions performed by speech: giving reports, asking questions, making promises, giving warnings, approving, regretting, apologizing, and so forth.

Dissenting voices

In view of the tremendous changes in language study that have marked the past twenty years, it is no surprise that journals in TESOL and applied linguistics reflect dissension and confusion. (The surprise, really, is that the field has not only continued but, in many places, flourished.) The number of linguists and language-teaching specialists who have chronicled the changes is legion. None, I think, speaks more succinctly and more effectively than does Dwight Bolinger in his 1968 lecture "The Theorist and the Language Teacher":

> If an applied linguist of the mid-1950s had gone to sleep in his cave, say around 1956, and awakened yesterday, the sight that greeted him would have sent him hurrying back to his dreams. Virtually every tenet that he had proclaimed in his heyday would have been returned to him upside down: writing once again beginning to assert itself over speech; grammar not learned inductively nor extended by analogy; language learning not a matter of habit-formation; the goal of language study to learn something about the human mind and not about linguistic behavior. And to cap this heap of insults, the poor fellow's descriptions of language were not very good and his claims to have anything to say to language teachers were not well-founded either. [Bolinger 1968, p. 30]

Bolinger was not alone in rejecting the transformationalist claims to near supernatural wisdom. Wilga M. Rivers, in 1968, argued convincingly that language will not leap forth full-blown and Minerva-like from any second speaker's brain:

> Creative and innovative use of language still takes place within a restricted framework, a finite set of formal arrangements to which the speaker's utterances must conform if he is to be comprehended and thus to communicate effectively. The speaker cannot "create" the grammar of the language as he innovates: He is making "infinite use of finite means."[2] His innovative ability will exist only to the degree that underlying competence exists—that the set of rules has been internalized. Foreign-language students must acquire the grammar of the foreign language so that it functions for them as does the grammar of their native language: as a vehicle of meaning that they do not even realize they are using. [Rivers 1968]

Robin Lakoff is in some respects more explicit than Rivers in repudiating the complete dismissal of audiolingual methods. Speaking as a transformationalist, she is perhaps the more effective. Stating that pattern drills can be of value, she continues: "There is nothing wrong with constructing drills to facilitate the memorization of facts about pluralization, complementizer-selection, . . . subject-rising, . . . or restrictive vs. nonrestrictive relative pronouns" (Lakoff 1969, p. 117).

And, though she espouses a tranformation-based method over the structuralist-based audiolingual, Lakoff damningly dismisses early "transformational" texts. Writing about three texts, two published in 1966 and one in 1968, Lakoff dismisses them with questioning praise.

> While many things about these treatments are admirable, and the attempt to bring rationalism to the teaching of language should of course be applauded and encouraged, I do not feel that these attempts have succeeded. These authors are not really using transformational grammar; they are using only its hollow shell of formalism; they are not employing rationalism at all, but resorting to new forms of the same old mumbo-jumbo; they have substituted one kind of rote learning for another, and the new kind is harder than the old. Their treatments do not allow scope for presenting the sorts of facts I have been talking about any more than did the structuralists' treatments allow them to do so, and for much the same reasons. Rather than teaching students to reason, they seem to me to be teaching students to use new formulas. Instead of filling in patterns of sentences—surface structures—students now have to learn patterns of abstractions—the rules themselves. And these rules are, without exception, fakes. Little is known about the exact form of most transformational rules. [Lakoff 1969]

It is, nevertheless, Bolinger who is the most specific and the most effective in bringing into perspective the overclaim of transformationalists and defending what he considers of value in structuralist-based methods. In his 1968 lecture quoted earlier, Bolinger corrects a number of misconceptions about structuralism. He acknowledges the value of transformational contributions but does not accept the system as the *be*-all and *end*-all of language teaching. Speaking with controlled (and entertaining) acerbity, Bolinger lists a number of important and pertinent points.

1. It was Harold Palmer (*Principles of Language Study*, 1921), and not the structuralists, who pronounced the four-skill teaching sequence (understanding, speaking, reading, writing) and, defining language as "a habit-forming process," urged repetitive drill.

2. The behaviorists' view of language acquisition as being conditioned and developed under social training, while admittedly incomplete, has not been proved false. In fact, Bolinger argues, recent experiments (1967) seem to favor the learning model of language over the discovery model.

3. Structuralists were not uniformly opposed to translation or to some use of the native language: these were shibboleths of the *direct*-methodists.

4. For teaching, both the behaviorist and mentalist posi-

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[2] Editor's Note: A phrase used by Humboldt and quoted by Chomsky in *Aspects*, p. 8.

tions have advantages. One of the major contributions of transformational theory is that it encourages the teaching of grammar rather than making such teaching taboo.

A plea for eclecticism

Bolinger's philosophy on language teaching is, I think, well summarized in the following passage:

> There are no guarantees in teaching. The generativists are right in planting suspicion as to the power of drills alone to yield control over points of grammar, but wrong to claim that "by definition, drills cannot teach rules." "Teaching" something involves more than the initial grasp of a rule. That may of course be taught by a deductive presentation. But being given a rule is like being introduced to a stranger; we may be able to recognize him on later encounters, but cannot be said to know him. Teaching a rule involves not just the phase of grasping but the phase of familiarizing. To imagine that drills are to be displaced by rule-giving is to imagine that digestion can be displaced by swallowing. We have to return to the lowly origin of drills, which was in the humble setting of the classroom, before anybody thought of dressing them up in behaviorist philosophy. We have pragmatic reasons for retaining them, and retain them we should. This says nothing of the limitless need for improving them. [Bolinger 1968, p. 39]

This plea for moderation—for eclecticism and for wise combining of linguistic findings as they relate to teaching techniques—is implicit throughout Bolinger's 1968 statement. Such a plea has since been made frequently: Corder, 1968; Cosgrave, 1970; Finocchiaro, 1971; Carroll, 1971, 1974; and, in the later seventies, Prator and Newton. To date, no ideal text has appeared. As the 1980 volume of *Language Teaching and Linguistics: Abstracts* and 1979–80 publications of the ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM indicate, work in applied linguistics and TESOL is directed to new types of programs. Linguistic method per se no longer holds center stage. The titles of two publications by Oxford University Press in 1979 indicate two new, and related, TESOL interests: *Sociolinguistic Aspects of Language Learning and Teaching* and *The Communicative Approach to Language Learning*. The April 1979 FORUM describes the notional syllabus that is in part a result of Council of Europe experts' considerations of a possible European unit-credit system. The Summer 1980 issue of *Applied Linguistics* indicates still another new direction in TESOL with its article on "Speech Acts and Second Language Learning," by Richard W. Schmidt and Jack C. Richards.

Linguistics and TESOL

It would seem, therefore, that the question posed earlier—"What has linguistics contributed to TESOL?"—can at best still be answered only in part and only semi-objectively. Admitting incompleteness[3] and bias, I propose that, at the least, linguistics has contributed the following methods and techniques.

1. The verifiable and almost objective description of English as it is actually used, despite the boring repetitiveness of dialogue drills such discovery may have led to.

2. Contrastive analysis, particularly as it has been improved on by post-transformational theorists, who extended it from phonology to syntactic and semantic comparisons. As John B. Carroll proposes, "Contrastive linguistics must study differences in meaning as well as in form. It must study morphological, syntactical, and lexical phenomena at least as much as it studies phonological ones" (Carroll 1973, p. 143).

In addition, contrastive analysis can be used not just to predict or explain language-learning problems caused by *interference* of the native language in using the target language but also to take advantage of similarities in language—the *convergence* of linguistic patterns. As S.P. Corder proposes, language teachers should take full advantage of the similarities, stressing *facilitation* as well as *interference* (Corder 1973, p. 280).

More recently, error analysis and its reflections in what has been called "interlanguage"—a type of transitional competence in second-language acquisition—(Selinker 1971; Corder 1975; Richards 1980) have replaced earlier, less systematic, studies of errors, making error analysis in its present form a promising offshoot of contrastive analysis.

3. Phonology, with its detailed description of English sounds. It should go without saying that the phonological description must incorporate the allophonic variants conditioned by context. The classroom teacher need not be concerned by such theoretical problems as the validity of the concept of the phoneme or the intricacies of generative phonology. Whatever the ultimate "truth" about the phoneme may be, the detailed descriptions of sounds made available by linguistics offers a better method for describing meaningful sounds and sound sequences than did the broad transcription of the earlier International Phonetic Alphabet.

Included with a phonemic description is the description of English intonational patterns. Granted, the available and classroom-practicable descriptions of meaningful variations in stress, juncture, and pitch do not cover the usage range of these superimposed changes in the sound stream available to and used by a native speaker of English. But even a simplified, nontechnical description of the way English speakers vary stress, pitch, and juncture helps a student in perceiving question patterns or making such contrasting statements as "The girl said, 'The man is crazy,' " versus " 'The girl,' said the man, 'is crazy.' "

The use of a detailed articulatory description of those English phonemes not present in the student's native language was referred to briefly above in the discussion of contrastive analysis. It seems obvious enough that describing exactly how a particular unfamiliar sound is formed can reinforce the teaching of it. Chinese students, for example, have less difficulty mastering the unfamiliar English /v/ if shown how similar it is to the /f/ phoneme they know: only voice distinguishes the two phonemes—not the articulatory difference required for the /w/ that Chinese speakers frequently substitute. Being aware of sounds or phonemes that are new and unfamiliar to foreign students of English does not guarantee prevention of problems in teaching the sounds; it certainly helps.

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[3] The work of such able contributors as M.A.K. Halliday, J.P.B. Allen, W.F. Mackey, R.L. Politzer, B. Spolsky, H.H. Stern, and numerous others has been left undiscussed; the work of psycholinguists and sociolinguists has been excluded.

Morphology, a second major concern in structural linguistics, while not so directly and obviously applicable in TESOL as phonology, nevertheless contains a good deal that is helpful for indicating relationships between sound and meaning in English. Structural linguists described in much detail the regular patterns of sounds of English—the *morphemes* or minimal meaningful units. An explanation of grammatical morphemes, such as the almost universal *-s* plural for English nouns and the dental suffix that indicates verbal past tense in all but some sixty "irregular" verbs, helps in illustrating the inflectional system of English. It is also useful both for distinguishing word classes and for understanding grammatical distinctions. For the few remaining inflections still used in present-day English are important and yet fairly easy to learn: the plural and possessive markers for nouns; the *-er*, *-est* (or the periphrastic *more*, *most*) marker of degree in adjectives and adverbs; the *-s*, *-ing*, and *-ed* markers of verb number, aspect, and tense.

An understanding of the morphemic principles underlying the formation of the English lexicon—for instance, the word-forming potential of such free morphemes (or bases) as *help* and *know*—is very helpful in teaching and in acquiring vocabulary. Consider the number of lexical prefixes and suffixes that can be added to form related words: *helper*, *helpful*, *helpfulness*, *unhelpful*, *helplessly*. Similarly, an understanding of the word-forming possibilities with such bound bases (from Latin) as *-mit* and *-mis(s)* can be tremendously useful.

Obviously, no explanation of the morphemic patterns of the language—nor any all-encompassing morphemic principle—can account for the tremendous range and variety of words to be found in English. Using methods based on the morphemic concept can, however, greatly assist. Recognizing the contrast in English words—contrasts shown in the use of both grammatical and lexical morphemes—can help students see regular patterns that appear in English sentences—patterns that indicate both grammatical and lexical meanings. Experiments in TESOL classes, using not just the nonsense sentences that structural linguists were so fond of but also such merely nonsensical sentences as *The careful robots have mothered the sickly kittens very gleefully*, indicate that university-level students, and many at secondary-school level, have developed an understanding of English morphology and parts of speech that traditional schoolroom grammar never succeeded in teaching very well, even to native speakers. TESOL texts and drills used for the past two decades have generally taken advantage of such a contextual teaching of vocabulary rather than that used by grammar-translation foreign-language texts: short readings with the inevitable list of fifteen or twenty new vocabulary words. For, just as native speakers of English determine or guess correctly the meaning of new words (from sentence position, inflectional *-s* plural endings or *-ed* past-tense markers, from morphemic pattern, and from such word markers as the noun determiners [*a*, *an*, *the*, *some*, etc.] and special category words [like *have*, *may*, *very*]), so also do second-language students who have worked long enough with the recurring patterns of spoken and written English.

The final paragraphs in the discussion of morphology have moved already into the domain of syntax, the indication of meaning shown by the arrangements of words and groups of words. Structural linguists, concerned with the analysis of actually used English sentences, laid a groundwork for explaining syntactic meaning. Transformational theorists revised and greatly extended this groundwork, attempting and in part achieving a much more ambitious task: for transformational theory, as stated, is concerned not just with analyzing a specific corpus of sentences but with describing all and only possible grammatical (or meaningful) sentences of a language. The theories of the transformationalists—not just superseding those of structural linguists but temporarily almost dismissing them—add completely new dimensions to the study and teaching of English. Needless to say, not all these theories have yet been applied, either to first- or second-language teaching. A major question that remains, in fact, is how fully the new concepts can be applied. Transformational grammar, however, using in its description of English both meaning and form and utilizing many of the valid and best points of the two earlier grammatical approaches, provides both linguists and language teachers with a far better and far more complete system for describing the English language than did earlier approaches.

Examples of the way transformational theory aids in showing sentence relationships were given as early as 1969 by Ronald Wardhaugh.

Typical of the materials already incorporated into some TESOL materials are the following, which Wardhaugh sees as "[sentences] suggesting a new principle of gradation; that is, of ordering structures from simple to complex."

1. The boy chased the dog.
2. The dog was chased by the dog.
3. The boy came. The boy is little.
4. The little boy came.
5. I asked Tom something. Tom wanted something.

6. I asked Tom what he wanted.
7. Someone opened the door.
8. The door opened.
9. You will eat your dinner.
10. Eat your dinner!

Discussing the first ten sentences, and two following ones, Wardhaugh proposes:

> There is some good theoretical reason in each case to claim a "primacy" for the odd-numbered members of each pair over the even-numbered members, because the former may be said to underlie the latter in some way, though the ways are somewhat different in each case. In the same way, sentence 11 may be said to be more basic than 12, even though 12 is more likely to be heard than 11: 11. Where are you going? I am going to the library. 12. Where are you going? To the library.

Wardhaugh also illustrates certain transformational concepts not yet incorporated into texts, although they are being studied by both native and nonnative speakers completing training as teachers of TESOL. These concepts deal with the ambiguity of certain English sentences (ambiguity fascinates transformational scholars as much or more than nonsense sentences and intonation patterns once fascinated structural linguists); they also deal with the more complex problem of sentences that seem syntactically similar or identical but, because of the underlying patterns from which they are formed, have quite different meanings. The latter are evident in Wardhaugh's sentences 15–20. (Asterisks indicate that the cited form does not appear in normal English within the indicated context.)

15. The boy is easy to please.
16. The boy is eager to please.
17. The boy is certain to please.
18. It is easy/*eager/*certain to please the boy.
19. The boy is eager/*easy/*certain. He intends to please someone.
20. It is certain/*easy/*eager/the boy will please.

[Wardhaugh 1969]

A look to the future

These, then, are the contributions of linguistic study to TESOL as of the early 1980s. What of tomorrow?

Feeling fairly certain that we will not in the near future see again such major contributions and major changes as structuralists and transformationalists brought to language teaching, I believe that significant changes in TESOL in the next decade will be directed toward achieving what Corder has called "communicative competence" rather than merely "grammatical competence" in the Chomskyan sense. As early as 1968, Corder outlined, in part, what a *pedagogical* grammar should contain.

> A textbook undoubtedly serves for the majority of teachers as the syllabus for the language course; few teachers yet feel able to devise a syllabus for themselves. But what are the considerations which enter into the making of a syllabus? Most of them have to do with the sociology and psychology of language: what are the learners studying the language for? what use do they expect to make of it? in what circumstances of social life are they going to use it? which particular language activities are to be provided for: speaking, or writing, or reading, for example? When all matters of this kind have been decided (and many syllabuses do not explicitly state the terminal behavior they are intended to produce), then the linguistic work must be done. What is the linguistic description of the terminal behavior? What vocabulary does it comprise? What grammatical features has it? What characteristics of intonation have to be taught? And other considerations of the same sort. [Corder 1973, p. 279]

In the developing of such a methodology, the major contributions will come from the disciplines and theories mentioned but not discussed: psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, speech-act theory. Ideas enunciated more than twenty years ago by J. R. Firth, and continued in the work of Halliday and others, will also contribute, since Firth might well be considered as prophet of many sociolinguistic and speech-act theories. The terms *notional* and *communicative* will, I suspect and hope, be defined into syllabuses and texts. It is unfortunate that we have for so long paid so little attention to the use the English language is to be put to and the context in which it will be practiced.

Whatever the new method or methods are called, however inclusive of linguistic features in addition to examples of spoken or written English, they must still be based on certain linguistic concepts and practices, many older than most of the learners and a number of the teachers will be. Wardhaugh, discussing theory and practice in 1969, spoke for the decade of the 1980s as well as the seventies, when he wrote his blunt caveat:

> First of all, we must say that our students still have to learn certain things if they are to speak the second language, regardless of the state that theoretical linguistics finds itself in. For example, students who are learning English must still learn to distinguish *beet* from *bit*, *bait* from *bet*, and *bet* from *bat*. They must learn that in English those words which we may still want to refer to as *adjective* go in front of nouns, and that subjects usually precede predicates. They must still learn that adjectives do not agree in number with nouns. They must still learn that an animal which barks is called a *dog*, not a *Hund*, nor a *chien*, nor a *perro*. They must still learn what the acceptable sentence patterns of English are, even though these sentence patterns might be called *surface structures* and be somehow of less interest to theoretically-minded linguists than something called *deep structure*. [Wardhaugh 1972, p. 11]

Optimistic despite the disputes over doctrine, or dogma, that this report summarizes, I conclude in Kurt Vonnegut's present-day religious idiom: "Peace."

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Which To Teach: British or American?

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This question might never have occurred to me if a certain fifteen-year-old student had not turned up in my class last September. Blaise had just returned to Hungary after a three-year stay in the United States with his parents, and he thought his command of English could be improved if he enrolled in my intermediate-level group. A few days after joining us, he came up to me, apologizing: "I'm very sorry, sir, for the way I speak English. I promise I'll do my best to get rid of my American accent." Since our first encounter I have been trying to convince Blaise that American English is not at all inferior to British English. However, my efforts have all been futile. His eyes full of guilt, he has been going out of his way to drop his American accent, and by now he has reached a point where he manages to say "I can't see the birds" with an RP accent when his full attention is on it, only to fall into the trap of uttering the same sentence with an American accent when somewhat distracted. His English has become what some would call "Branglish" or "Midatlantic English"—that is to say, a hybrid form of English.

Blaise's predicament gave me several questions to ruminate on: Ought I to share his doubts or not? Hadn't I better encourage him to drop his American accent altogether? How could I have prevented his "Branglish" from coming into being? And need it be prevented at all? Blaise, however, is an exception to the rule. Very few children in Hungary come to school with a near-native command of English, either British or American. The overwhelming majority start learning English from scratch. Unlike Blaise, they have no a priori linguistic norm imposed on them. This fact enhances the responsibility of the teacher, who is expected to make decisions in matters of principle vital to thousands of beginners.

Factors to consider

At present there are two major dialects of English: British and American. The question that immediately springs to mind is which one learners of English in general, and Hungarian learners of English in particular, should study, and whether there exist any objective criteria to justify either choice. In order to properly tackle the problem, we must first take a look at the main objectives of teaching and learning English as a foreign language.

"Language is the possession of a social group, an indispensable set of rules which permits its members to relate to each other, to interact with each other, to cooperate with each other: it is a social institution. . . . [It is] a body of socially conditioned or culturally determined ways of behaving."[1] The teaching and learning of a foreign language

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The original version of this article was a lecture delivered by the author at the International Conference in American Studies held in Budapest, 8–13 April 1980.

[1] S. Pit Corder, *Introducing Applied Linguistics* (New York: Penguin, 1973), pp. 25–28.

must also be socially conditioned, as it varies greatly according to social needs. If the learner is obliged to "identify with the members of the other linguistic-cultural group and be willing to take on very subtle aspects of their behavior such as their language or even their style of speech,"[2] the *integrative approach* is adopted. The *instrumental approach*, on the other hand, is primarily utilitarian, and implies the use of a foreign language without any desire to identify with its culture. The integrative approach is assumed, say, by Pakistani immigrants seeking a permanent home in Britain, whereas the instrumental approach is adopted by Hungarian learners of English. A.H. King[3] illustrates the situation as a pyramid divided into three superimposed sections. The top section represents internationally comprehensible English, the middle section represents a local standard of English, and the bottom section represents English which, like pidgin, is not intercomprehensible. It is reasonable to say that pidgin is most unlikely to be of any use for either the Pakistani or the Hungarian learner. However, the Pakistani will use English as a *national* link to communicate chiefly with British citizens, thus requiring the local standard of English where he lives. In contrast, we Hungarians need English as a vehicle for *international* communication, with the intention of creating and maintaining contacts with all kinds of native and nonnative English speakers, whose whereabouts and dialects cannot be anticipated. It is completely unpredictable whom our fifteen-year-old students will encounter, say, in ten years' time. Only with a few adult students are we able to foretell with some degree of certainty the variant they are likely to need. The future goals of our students being as vague as they generally are, there need be no justification for preferring either major variety of English on theoretical grounds.

Changing positions

Yet, looking at the English-language-teaching situation in Hungary from a historical point of view, the hegemony of British English is all too obvious. With certain politico-economic reasons accounting for the tradition, British English was handed down, like folk songs, from one generation to the next. *My* English teacher's English teacher had learned British English from *his* English teacher, so it could only be British English that he was able to pass on to my English teacher. *My* English teacher, in turn, also spoke British English, and, as a result, *I* speak British English, too. The snowball has been rolling on for at least a century, and until recently there seemed to be no reason why it could not go on similarly ad infinitum.

Lately, however, the snowball seems to have been losing speed. Today we are in a position to meet Americans, to read American books, and to see American films. This necessarily has an impact on our hitherto "unspoiled" British dialect. American linguistic forms creep in all the time, and the onslaught does not promise to slacken in the near future. Oddly enough, with the abrupt shift of the political and economic center of gravity of the western hemisphere from Europe to the United States, the American variety of English has also forced itself upon British English as it is spoken within the British Isles. It is a strange paradox that as the flood of Americanisms in standard British English increases, most people lose their ability to recognize their American origin.

As a matter of fact, divergencies between British and American English have never been as great as is sometimes supposed. They have been conspicuous enough, especially differences in accent, albeit by no means so great as to hinder communication. Lewis rightly stresses that "most people seem to have a quite exaggerated impression of the extent and importance of these differences. From the point of view of mutual intelligibility they are not important: they do not constitute a large proportion of the items and features of the language. Intelligent adults, although they are often fascinated by these differences (when they notice, that is), experience no difficulty whatever in comprehending the other accent in ordinary everyday conversation."[4]

Suffice it to say that the gap between the two major dialects seems to be narrowing these days. This fact must have its implications for the teaching of English as a foreign language. Indeed, if native speakers experience a tendency to rapprochement, why should we nonnative speakers make a big fuss over the issue by overreacting to "errors" of blending the two varieties? Michael West's fears are no longer borne out: "One of the greatest difficulties of the language learner is to avoid acquiring a hybrid form of the language... Whereas a few items of dialect in a standard British setting are merely interesting, an excess of Americanisms has an undesirable social implication; it tends to suggest a Teddy-boy speech."[5]

The case for tolerance

In the light of the relative loss of homogeneity of any one English dialect, on the one hand, and the fact that learners will need English mainly for international purposes, on the other, teachers are strongly advised to adopt a *policy of tolerance*—tolerance towards the selection of a dialect just as much as towards the mixture of dialectal variants. This attitude has the implicit danger of incongruent language use, such as pronouncing the word *car* once in a British way, only to Americanize it the next time. Atkinson, for one, claims that such a fear is unbased when he writes: "These difficulties automatically become ironed out through experience, so that each individual foreign learner (just as every individual native speaker) has his own recognizable range of phonemes."[6]

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[2] C.H. Prator, "The British Heresy in Teaching English as a Foreign Language," in *Readings in the Sociology of Language*, ed. J.A. Fishman (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), p. 461.

[3] A.H. King, "Intercomprehensibility—the Humpty-Dumpty Problem of English as a World Language," *The Incorporated Linguist*, 1971/1, p. 10.

[4] L.W. Lewis, "The American and British Accents of English," *English Language Teaching*, 1971/3, p. 240.

[5] Michael West, "American and British Usage," *English Language Teaching*, 1958/2, p. 41.

In any case, native English speakers are fairly sympathetic towards the errors of nonnative speakers. So long as the utterance conveys the intended message, they will not attempt to correct interdialectal or nonstandard forms, and are not offended by them. They will even allow for grammatical mistakes such as the use of the double negative, which is, in effect, not unacceptable except in a social sense or in terms of the grammar of a standard dialect. The underlying motive for the native speaker's goodwill is that he normally takes the nonnative speaker for what he is: a *foreigner*. And no foreigner is ever expected to fulfill the same roles in the society as a native speaker. Or as Pit Corder put it: "In most societies, the learner will never be integrated into it as a full member with all the multiple roles that a member of that society may achieve or have ascribed to him. He is likely to have ascribed to him the role of 'foreigner.' This role has certain expectations associated with it, very often a great tolerance of deviation from the various norms of behavior, both linguistic and nonlinguistic."[7]

Foreign-language teaching, therefore, should set its goals in a closer perspective than it did in the past. It is both unnecessary and unfeasible to expect native-like perfection of the countless individuals who choose or are compelled to learn English. The recognized aim should "merely" consist in preparing the learners to live up to the expectations of their role as foreigners. To be more precise, the development of "defective but effective" communicative abilities may be a reasonable objective to achieve, implying that the learners are not to be discouraged and defeated by the rigorous demands of perfection. In recent years various investigations have aimed at specifying the components of foreign-language ability, but none of them have as yet approached a sufficient degree of exactness to serve as a basis for devising a learning program.[8]

All these ideas are by no means to suggest that any or all *norms* are to be dismissed in foreign-language teaching. On the contrary, the teacher, while expressing his readiness to accept any consistent reproduction of a variety, is obliged to recommend one as a model. This can be, as we pointed out, either British or American. Although in Hungary the former has been preferred for historical reasons, the teacher can feel free to impose American English on his learners for reasons of his own (e.g., should this be the variety that he speaks himself).

Which dialect to choose

The next question that needs an answer is which of the several dozen British and American dialects should be the "ideal" which a teacher or a learner keeps in mind in imparting instruction or learning a language. General American offers one obvious choice, it being the common language for about two-thirds of the total population of the United States. As far as British English is concerned, the problem is more complex. Standard British English with RP pronunciation is spoken by an estimated five percent of the population only, but it used to be and still is the de facto model in many parts of the world, including Hungary. While rejecting the assumption that Standard British English, often referred to as the "prestige" or "establishment" dialect, is linguistically or socially superior, the argument that it had better be retained as the major variant of instruction seems tenable for several reasons:

a. It has the resources for coping with the widest range of language functions: government, administration, the law, education, science, technology, trade, journalism. Indeed, certain of these functions are carried out exclusively in the standard dialect.

b. The stylistic variability of nonstandard dialects is generally restricted, particularly at the more formal end of the spectrum.

c. The acceptance of a common norm ensures a wider range of intelligibility in the English-speaking world.

d. Since standard dialects have been historically the object of linguistic description, we know more about them and consequently are able to produce better materials for teaching them.[9]

It is one of the main tasks of modern foreign-language teaching to conciliate these two contradictory issues, namely, to insist on a standard norm of instruction while asserting goodwill regarding errors of transgressing the bounds of the selected dialectal norm. This balance can best be maintained if the learners are invariably made aware of how far they can digress from the standard norm without causing misunderstanding or unintelligibility. We cannot but agree with the concept that claims that "the learner must share the responsibility of knowing some of these differences, so that he will not confuse differences between dialects with ungrammatical forms resulting from interference from his own

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6. R.E.B. Atkinson, "RP and English as a World Language," *IRAL*, February 1975, p. 71.

7. S. Pit Corder, op. cit., pp. 47–48.

8. One such project of international fame is J.A. van Ek's *Threshold Level* (Strasbourg: Council of Cultural Cooperation of the Council of Europe, 1975).

9. S. Pit Corder, op. cit., pp. 207–8.

Sponting

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A long-time member of the faculty at the University of Hawaii at Manoa, JASON B. ALTER came to the Beijing Foreign Languages Institute in the People's Republic of China in June, 1979, for a two-year stay. Professor Alter, who holds a B.A. from Harvard University and an M.A. from the University of Michigan, has also taught in Taiwan and Singapore. He has edited over a hundred TESL texts for use in East Asia, including two dictionaries as well as other works, and says he never tires of "being on the firing line in the TESL classroom."

Professor Alter writes: ''I was exhilarated to read the article by Prof. Philip Tsai (''Neither Jane nor I are happy''?) in the January 1980 issue of the FORUM, *as Prof. Tsai was a student of mine during his undergraduate days at Taiwan Normal University in Taipei. At the moment—April 1980—I find myself teaching ESL at the Beijing Foreign Languages Institute, English Department, and I would like to share some sponting insights and techniques with your readers.''*

I guess I've been sponting ever since I started my TESL career in Taiwan in 1956. But it was not until I wrote an article that appeared in the December 1971 issue of the *RELC Journal* (in Singapore) that I christened my notion of the *spont: S*pontaneous *p*articipation, *o*rally, on *n*ewly-introduced *t*opics.

Sponting had worked in Taiwan and at the University of Hawaii, where I've been holding forth since 1964, with students of varying levels of proficiency in English. But was Beijing ready for sponting? I can happily report that my students here (and my colleagues) have cottoned to the idea.[1]

What sponting is

But what is sponting, and how does one get into it? It's a way to get students to generate (there's that catchword!) their own utterances in the classroom, to involve *all* the students, to dynamicize the language-learning atmosphere.

I start off the class hour by writing the name of the ''birthday persona'' on the blackboard. Today, March 31, 1980, happens to be the birthday of Cesar Chavez, 1927. I also write ''1927'' and ask a student how old Chavez is today. Numbers can be a bugaboo.[2] I pepper the class with questions,[3] always keeping in mind the level of each particular class. When I get the proper response—53—I ask one student where he/she expects to be when *he/she* is fifty-three years old. I ask another student when *he/she* himself/herself will be that old. I ask how to spell ''fifty-three.'' Often, the hyphen is neglected. I ask for any other word that has a hyphen in it. This may seem frenetic, but it's planned spontaneity; and experience (over twenty years' worth) in assorted TESL milieus testifies to the efficacy of sponting. Suppose a student gives me another number to show the use of a hyphen—*twenty-seven*, perhaps. I ask someone else to make a sentence with *twenty-seven*. ''It goes on and on'' (like the song) and forces students to get involved and to stay involved.

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[1] EDITOR'S NOTE: The author uses a number of words and phrases that may be unfamiliar to many readers. Therefore we have provided glosses of some of these expressions in the footnotes.
cotton to=to take a liking to; become friendly with. (informal)

[2] *bugaboo*=an imaginary object of fear; a source of concern.

[3] *pepper with*=to pelt or shower with small missiles; to hit with rapid repeated blows.

Let me digress here with a cross-cultural bon mot,[4] related to numbers, that may someday save a colleague from embarrassment. The University of Hawaii is now a member of the Western Athletic Conference, and has been building up its football team. Well, a couple of seasons ago, we were playing USC (the University of Southern California), a perennial football giant,[5] in the last game of the season. Jimmy the Greek[6] (try sponting with that one) had decreed that UH was a 39-point underdog.[7] I passed this fact along to my section of foreign students, one of whom was from Afghanistan. I noticed that she seemed troubled by the above point-spread,[8] so I asked why. She said, "Why thirty-nine? Why not forty, or thirty-five?" In short order, I learned that the number thirty-nine is anathema[9] in her language—so much so, I am told, that if you happen to be that age, you say you're "forty minus one" or "thirty-five plus four."

On a recent trip through the cultural heartland of the People's Republic of China, I picked up a shirt that reads "Chengdu 38," but the salesclerk disclaimed any special significance of that number. One of my colleagues here later opined[10] that "Three-Eight" (March the eighth) is International Women's Day, but this appears coincidental.

Now, back to Cesar Chavez. I ask the class if they know that July was named after Julius Caesar. I ask for other words beginning with *ch-* that have a "sh" sound—like *chauffeur, Chevrolet, champagne*. Noting that all three of these words come from French, I ask for the capital of France. The students of course know who Julius Caesar was and what the capital of France is, but they have not often had much opportunity to verbalize these points in English. Next, I ask for words beginning with the true "ch-" sound: *chin, change, check*. You can work with *chin/shin*. *Check* is eminently spontworthy.[11] Ask for comments on *check* vis-à-vis *cheque*. How about a homonym for *check—Czech*. Cf. *Please check this Czech check*.

Anomalous homonyms

Speaking of homonyms, I have coined a term—*anomalous homonym*—that fits right in here, linguistically and lexically. To wit: *picket/pick it*. Notice that the two-word combination is homonymous with one word. This is a good device to dissuade the student from "pronouncing" the spaces between words. *Caesar* (in my Boston/Ann Arbor/Taipei/Honolulu/Singapore/Beijing idiolect) is an anomalous homonym for *seize 'er*. And you might very well be apt to say, "Seize 'er, Caesar." On a personal note, I suggest to my students that my own given name, Jason, could be an acronym for July, August, September, October, November. Acronyms also lend themselves to sponting, by the way. How about a bona-fide homonym for *seize?* We have *sees, seas, C's,* and *See's* (the last an ono—"delicious" in Hawaiian—brand of candy).

All the while, I am eliciting sentence examples and student-to-student interchange. Communication is going on, at a rapid pace. I have one student ask another a question using a particular item that some other student has just come up with, or I have a student paraphrase or repeat one of my own questions, to ask still another student.

Sponting with FORUM

Sponting can enrich any language class. I am not speaking prescriptively, nor do I advocate abandoning whatever method you yourself favor. I am merely suggesting embellishment possibilities that have worked for me in a variety of TESL situations at home and abroad, with students at various levels. Let me show you what you can do with a single word: FORUM (Yea!). Of course, we're all "for 'em," not against them. The students can be induced to take sides on a given issue—for/against. You can teach the abbreviation *vs.*—which reminds me of an Ogden Nash book: *Versus*.[12] With upper-level students, you might even want to expatiate on the character who would read poetry immediately upon arising every morning: "He went from bed to verse." (Ouch!)[13]

What other words can we get from FORUM without rearranging any letters? Note *for, or, rum*. Have the students make sentences using one, two, or all three of these in a sentence. A teetotaler is definitely not for rum, nor is a member of Alcoholics Anonymous.[14] Look up the origins of *teetotaler*. One spont leads to another, and often includes a cultural component. The A.A. has a spontworthy slogan: "If you want to drink, that's your business. If you want to stop drinking, that's our business."

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[4] *bon mot*=a clever saying; a witticism. (a phrase borrowed from French)

[5] *giant*=something unusually large, powerful, or important in its field.

[6] *Jimmy the Greek*=a well-known oddsmaker (one who predicts the outcome of a competition) in the United States.

[7] *underdog*=one who is expected to lose a contest or struggle, as in sports or politics. A 39-point underdog is expected to score 39 points less than the opponent.

[8] *point-spread*=the difference between the number of points gained (or predicted to be gained) by the winner and the loser.

[9] *anathema*=something cursed, reviled, or shunned; something intensely disliked or loathed.

[10] *opine*=to state as an opinion; to think.

[11] *spontworthy:* a term coined by the author meaning "quite capable of being sponted with." *-worthy* is an adjective-forming suffix meaning (1) fit or safe for (*a seaworthy vessel*); (2) of sufficient worth for (*a newsworthy event*).

[12] Ogden Nash (1902–71) was an American writer of humorous and satirical poetry. He used many puns, and sometimes invented words or misspelled real words to produce a carefully planned effect. His use of *Versus* as the title of a collection of his verses is an example of a pun, which may be defined as "a play on words, sometimes on different senses of the same word and sometimes on the similar sense or sound of different words" (*American Heritage Dictionary*). Several verses by Nash appeared in the October 1977 issue of the FORUM.

[13] This is, of course, a play on the well-known saying "He went from bad to worse," meaning his condition (behavior, etc.) deteriorated. In some dialects of American English (and English spoken with certain foreign accents) the pronunciation of the two sentences is virtually identical.

Back to FORUM: remove one letter, and make another word—*form*. What does *in top form* mean?[15] Compare the use of *form* in the British school system with *grade* in the United States. Other high-frequency words derivable from the letters of FORUM are: *of, from, fur, four, our*.

The TESL practitioner must be cross-culturally sensitive. One doesn't elaborate on "rum" examples amidst a society that abstains from alcohol. But in Hawaii, my regular stamping grounds,[16] there's a popular alcoholic concoction called a "mai tai"—made with rum. Compare *That's my tie* and *That's a mai tai*—not a bad minimal pair. It's a challenge to find lexically valid minimal-pair sentences of this genre.

I am ever trying to expose my students to the ins and outs[17] of American manners and mores. As we plunge into the 1980s (cf. *decade* and *decayed*), American English is unquestionably avant-garde[18] in the People's Republic of China. I do what I can to tune in, to keep my students informed; having college-age progeny of my own gives me a leg up.[19] Out of FORUM we can also get *murf*, which sounds like *Murph*, a common nickname for anyone named Murphy. Early in our second term, here in Beijing, we celebrated St. Patrick's Day, a cultural happening that I mentioned in my classes.[20]

Speaking of the "wearing of the green," I relate another incident that illustrates how direct translation, for the cross-culturally uninitiated, can be humiliating. On one occasion when I was studying Chinese, I was asked to make a sentence using *green*. I said: "Mr. Wang is wearing a green hat." I couldn't figure out why the teacher took umbrage[21] at this seemingly innocuous example. Little did I know at the time that to say that a man is wearing a green hat is to say that his wife is running around with some other man. (Who would've thought?)

At the B.F.L.I., I'm teaching classes of a manageable size: 13, 13, 14. Our forty-person group of sophomores is divided thus. This term I'm teaching listening, speaking, and word study.

Lexinyms

From my current catbird seat,[22] let me share with you another notion that I call the *lexinym*. This is also calculated to elicit spontaneous reactions from students, encouraging them to think in English about English, and to use English. By "lexinym" I mean a word like *nuclear*, which, when two adjacent letters are switched, spells *unclear*. After finding such a pair, I ask students to speculate on a meaning connection between the two words. In this case there may be at least three: (*a*) The notion of nuclear fission is unclear to the layman; (*b*) You can't see the nucleus unless you look through a microscope; (*c*) It is not entirely clear whether we have been using nuclear energy to help or to harm humankind. (This last can engender a discussion.)

The aim of the lexinym is not to have students make sentences using either of the two correlates; rather, these are meant to entice the student to probe below the surface meanings of individual words, to inspire the appreciation of contexts. Other lexinyms: *from/form, marital/martial, lips/lisp, alter/later, won/own*. This category is a bit sparse, so you might want to venture into the realm of the anomalous lexinym, where the letters to be switched need not be side by side: *dog/god, spot/tops, rabid/braid, teacher/cheater, break/brake* (this last pair being homonyms as well).[23]

An example of sentence sponting

Here's a sentence taken at random from the lesson that my students were doing this very week: *The young man turned to him with such a look of frankness that Benson felt that he must be very careful*. Spontworthiness lies in the eye or in the ear of the beholder, but I would suggest to you that if the situation calls for it, you could spont with each and every word in the above sample sentence.

Shall we give it a go?[24]

The:

a. Give other words that start with this kind of a *th-: that, then, thus*.

b. Make a sentence using any one of the above three words. (Give the student some leeway.[25] Then ask another student to use one of the remaining two words; this requires him to have listened to the first student.)

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[14] A *teetotaler* is a person who drinks no alcoholic beverages; *rum* is an alcoholic liquor distilled from molasses or sugar cane; *Alcoholics Anonymous* is an organization of people who help one another avoid excessive or compulsive consumption of alcohol by abstaining from all alcoholic drinks; *A.A.* is a commonly used abbreviation of the name.

[15] *in top form*=especially fit or able; performing very well.

[16] *stamping ground(s)*=one's customary environment or favorite gathering place.

[17] *ins and outs*=all the details and intricacies of an activity or process.

[18] *avant-garde*=of or belonging to the vanguard; ahead of the times (used especially in the arts). (a borrowing from French)

[19] *leg up*=a helping hand; a boost; a head start.

[20] *St. Patrick's Day*=March 17, observed in honor of Saint Patrick, the patron saint of Ireland. Many Americans of Irish ancestry celebrate St. Patrick's Day by wearing green, taking part in parades, parties, etc.

[21] *take umbrage*=be offended; resent.

[22] *catbird seat*=a position of great advantage or prominence.

[23] A few other anomalous lexinyms may be found on the "Lighter Side" page of the Forum's October 1979 issue.

[24] *give it a go*=make an attempt at it; try to do it.

[25] *leeway*=an allowable margin of freedom or variation or tolerance.

c. The *the* the teacher meant was not that *the*. (Are you familiar with the Victor Borge shtick on Oral Punctuation? Try it—you'll like it.)[26]

young:

a. Give me a word that rhymes with *young: lung, rung, sung*. (Good for checking on perception of various sounds, and for vocabulary expansion.)

b. How young is young?

c. "In the spring, a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love."[27] (Sayings and aphorisms can be edifying.)

man:

a. Give a sentence using *man* as a verb: *Man the lifeboats!*

b. Give a longer word that starts with *man-: manifest, manufacture, mandarin*.

c. Compare *He was a gentleman* and *He was a gentle man*.

turned:

a. Note that it's very hard to hear the *d* in *turned* when the next word begins with a *t*.

b. *He turned over in his grave*.[28] For advanced learners: *All men are cremated* [sic] *equal*.[29]

c. Other two-word verbs with *turned: turned in, turned up, turned into*.

to:

a. Homonyms: *two, too*.

b. In Hawaiian, a *tutu* is a grandmother.

c. What did Caesar say to Brutus? "You too, Brutus?"

him:

a. President Lyndon Johnson had a dog named Him. There are Chinese family names that lend themselves to an Abbott/Costello routine: "Did you give Him to Hu?" "No, I gave him to Mi."[30] Etc.

b. How do you pronounce *Himalayas?*

c. Rush headlong through the alphabet, one student at a time, saying whether the item is valid or not, and search for one-syllable rhyming words for *him: dim, gym, Jim, Kim, limb, mim* (cf. *mem*), *rim, Tim, vim, whim*. (I leave you to your own devices to embellish these.)

with:

a. Add letters to build other words: *wither, withstand, without*.

b. He's really with it.[31] (For recognition?)

c. *Do you want the punch with?*[32] (Here, *with* seems to be masquerading as an adjective.)

such:

a. Other words ending in *-ch: itch, sketch, beseech*.

b. "Such is life."[33] (Ask for some context that would lead one to make this comment.)

c. Other words beginning with this kind of *su-* sound: *somewhere, subway, succor*.

a:

a. Do you say *He got an M.A.* or *He got a M.A.?*

b. Compare *bazaar* and *bizarre*.

c. *How many A's did she get last term?*

look:

a. Backwards, this spells *Kool*, a brand of cigarettes.

b. Pronounce *like, lack, Luke, leak, lake*.

c. *Look before you leap!*[34]

of:

a. *He should've gone*. NOT: *He should of gone*.[35]

b. *Of Thee I Sing*.[36]

c. How do you feel about ending a sentence with *of? He's the author I was thinking of*.

frankness:

a. Other words with suffix *-ness: goodness, madness, blindness*.

b. *Frank was frank*.

c. Compare: *Francis/Frances*; *Francis/Frank*; *Robert/Bob*; *William/Bill*.

that:

a. Sometimes *that* is obligatory, and sometimes optional.

b. *That is that*.[37]

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[26] *shtick*=a clever theatrical device or gimmick. (Yiddish slang) The author refers to a humorous recording (in English) by Danish comedian Victor Borge, in which he represents each of the various punctuation marks by an oral sound (or combination of sounds) suggesting the written shape of the mark.

[27] A frequently quoted line from Tennyson's "Locksley Hall."

[28] A saying meaning that something that has been said or done would shock or upset the (deceased) person referred to.

[29] A play on the well-known phrase *all men are created equal*, which occurs in the American Declaration of Independence.

[30] Bud Abbott and Lou Costello were a comedy team that appeared in many moving pictures during the 1940s and '50s.

[31] *with it*=alert, spirited, wise, informed. (slang)

[32] *with*=with something added (in this case, usually an alcoholic liquor).

[33] A common variant of this expression is *That's life* (meaning "That's the way it is, and there's nothing you can do to change it.").

[34] A common saying meaning to be cautiously aware of the probable results before doing some new thing.

[35] Since unstressed *have* and *of* are identical in pronunciation, this is a common spelling error among native speakers of English.

[36] A well-known line from the patriotic song "America" (sometimes called "My Country, 'Tis of Thee"). It has the same tune as the British national anthem, "God Save the Queen." It is also the title of a musical show.

[37] Meaning: "Well, that's done!" or "That has been taken care of!" It is usually contracted: *That's that*.

c. *This and that*.[38]

Benson:

a. *Which one is Ben's son?*

b. Give a polysyllabic word beginning with *b-*: *betterment, borderline, bafflement*.

c. Other words ending in *-son*: *venison* (cf. *This is Venice, son*), *unison*, *Tennyson* (cf. *Would you like to play tennis, son?*).

felt:

a. *He liked to wear a felt hat*.

b. Rhyming words for *felt*: *svelte, melt, dealt*.

c. *They felt like a million dollars*.[39]

that:

See above.

he:

a. Backwards—*eh*: *So you're not going, eh?*

b. Which is it—*It's he* or *It's him?*

c. Words beginning with *he-*: *hedonist, heroine, heave*.

must:

a. Homonym: *mussed*.

b. Rearrange letters: *Tums* ("for the tummy").[40]

c. *Seeing that play is a must*. (Noun)

be:

a. *To be or not to be*....[41]

b. *What will be will be*. Discuss.

c. Note the three-word noun *bride-to-be* and the two-word adjective *would-be*.[42]

very:

a. As an adjective: *That's the very bus you have to catch*.

b. Words ending in *-very*: *bravery, thievery, delivery*.

c. *Alice: "Does it get hot there in the summer?" Jim: "Very!"* (Produce other utterances that will result in the one-word response "Very.")

careful:

a. Compare *carful*.

b. Other words with suffix *-ful*: *fearful, wonderful, mindful*.

c. *I couldn't care less*.

Actually, I couldn't care more, and I recommend the above to you. I hope that to spont will become your wont! □

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[38] *This and that* =one thing and another; a combination of a number of small items or occurrences.

[39] A common saying meaning that they felt wonderful.

[40] *Tums* are a brand of pills taken to aid the digestion. The advertising slogan for this product is "Tums for the tummy." (*Tummy* is a baby-talk word for *stomach*.)

[41] A famous line from Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, being the first words of Hamlet's soliloquy (Act III, Scene 1).

[42] *bride-to-be* =a future bride (someone who will be a bride in the near future). *would-be* (adj.)=desiring or professing to be.

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language, and try to excuse his mistakes by pinning them onto 'the other dialect.' "[10]

The hearer's needs

We have so far analyzed the issue of the selection of a standard norm from the point of view of the speaker, the "active" participant of communication. Would the same attitude apply to the "passive receptor," *the hearer*, as well? Certainly not! Whereas a person can afford to express himself within the limitations of his linguistic command, he has no such control over what is said to him by others. Like it or not, he must make the best of whatever dialectal variant of English he is exposed to.

It follows that the language-teaching process should carefully prepare learners for this necessity, so as to spare them the schizophrenia of being fluent speakers and slow hearers. In listening-comprehension materials, RP or GA speakers should always be mingled (as they have not been in the past) with speakers whose accents reflect their geographical and social positions. I would go so far as to suggest that ear training is a preliminary condition for the development of overall communicative abilities. □

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[10] Dubin and Olshtain, "Clearing the Air," *English Teaching Forum, 17*, 3 (July 1979), p. 34.

Poetry for Instructional Purposes: Authenticity and Aspects of Performance

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Few teachers will grudge the place accorded the novel or short story in expanding vocabulary, reinforcing structure, or breathing life into the body of language. The poem, however, with its obscurities and sometimes archaic expression and spelling, has a harder time defending itself as valid instructional material rather than mere decoration. Among language teachers today the specific charge lies in the area of relevance to immediate needs, as illustrated by this remark made by a teacher at a recent international conference: "I'm not against poetry. Don't get me wrong. It's just that when the purpose of most courses is communicative competence—as fast as possible—poetry is just not relevant. Let's face it. It's a luxury."

The conclusion seems to be that the teaching of poetry, as one recent work on literature complains, "presents difficulties, and many teachers are inclined to avoid it as long as they can" (Moody 1971). The above statements also compound the dilemma faced by many teachers when organizing courses: maybe it's desirable, but is it useful? Particularly in intensive language programs, where the time factor inhibits all but the most pressing items, poetry is likely to be the Cinderella when all the rest have marched off to the ball. What, then, is the present challenge to this literary activity, long considered one of the highest manifestations of verbal culture, and what is the language teacher's proper response?

A supplier of needs

"My poetry is like a stove in the summer or a fan in the winter. It runs against the popular tastes and has no practical use."
Matsuo Basho, *The Rustic Gate*

The estrangement of many teachers from poetry is in marked contrast to past practice—and that which still survives in many systems of higher education. Too often, however, a vague sense of "getting to the heart of the language" has persuaded teachers to embrace literature in such a way that it monopolizes the curriculum. And this has been at the expense of urgently needed practical skills such as speaking and hearing. Imagine a class of engineering students faced with a large proportion of textbooks and written assignments in English while the language department pursues its programs in modern American literature or general conversation skills. Surely the need here is for integrated and functionally centered objectives.

To take another example: if someone stops Miss Fukuda in the street and asks the way to Kyoto Tower, a blank look followed by an inspired recitation of "Stopping by Woods on a Snowy Evening" or a few Mother Goose rhymes may leave the stranger highly entertained but certainly without

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Parts of this paper were delivered orally at the Japanese Association of Language Teachers conference held at Doshisha University, Kyoto, 23-25 November, 1979.

the desired help, since purpose-directed communication has failed to take place.

Like any other activity, the study of poetry must justify its right to inclusion in the curriculum. This it can do by making itself a practical supplier of the pupils' needs and an effective source of motivation when other learning has become stale.

The improvement of skills

"In poetry, every experience takes on a verbal quality."
Octavio Paz, *Alternating Current*

The study of poetry involves all four skills.

Reading. Because of its compressed form, the poem allows the student considerable freedom to interpret, theorize, and feel, as well as being an effective source of structural and lexical meaning. Memorization is rarely a problem in this area of language study, since it is a mark and indeed definition of poetry that it is "memorable."

Writing. What is the most powerful tool that the student brings to the learning situation? Imagination. This fact is often overlooked by teachers who are more accustomed to providing material than to asking learners to produce it. Moreover, the writing of poetry is frequently considered too great a demand on students' abilities. But it is not. Writing poetry, which involves the full personality of the individual, is, first and foremost, a *playful* activity and therefore accessible to all, given the goodwill and inventiveness of the teacher.

Listening and Speaking. The poem must be read aloud. Poetry is a verbal art form, and to comprehend a poem silently is almost like trying to appreciate a piece of music from the score alone—without reference to the performance. Alliteration and rhythm, intonation, assonance, and pause all help to create the total aesthetic impression as well as informing the student about the speech patterns of English.

SELECTION

Poetry's malaise in English-language teaching is undoubtedly due in part to the choice of materials and the subsequent charges of irrelevance. Much literature teaching has been, and, alas, still is, conducted as if the twentieth century did not exist. Superb as they are, the great works of Marvell and Milton, Shelley and Poe must prove themselves to be practically and culturally relevant in the classroom. No work of art is immune from such demands, certainly not this piece by John Dryden, which I have been required to teach to students training to be high-school teachers:

ABSALOM AND ACHITOPHEL

Of these the false Achitophel was first
A name to all succeeding ages cursed.
For close designs, and crooked counsels fit;
Sagacious, bold, and turbulent of wit;
Restless, unfixed in principles and place;
In power unpleased, impatient of disgrace.
A fiery soul, which, working out its way,
Fretted the pigmy body to decay;
And o'er-informed the tenement of clay.
(Extract)

If John Dryden had a reader in mind when writing that poem, it was most certainly not the ESL/EFL student. It does not follow from this, however, that all poetry should be excluded. The point I am making is simply that careful selection of material is necessary—closer to linguistic levels and interests—if learning is to be productive. Poetic material need be neither trivial nor watered down. In place of Elizabethan or nineteenth-century lyricists we can look to the war poets such as Wilfred Owen and Siegfried Sassoon, and expressionists such as Sylvia Plath and Allen Ginsberg; our material can range from the songs of Leonard Cohen to the nonsense verse of Ogden Nash and Spike Milligan.

Teachers and students must not be shy of difficulty. Meaning is not always immediate, but is the result of persistence and concentration. Nevertheless, the following poem presents little semantic confusion (as compared to the fragment from Dryden given above). This is a poem by the American poet Gary Snyder.

I WENT INTO THE MAVERICK BAR

I went into the Maverick Bar
In Farmington, New Mexico.
And drank double shots of bourbon
backed with beer.
My long hair was tucked under a cap
I'd left the earring in the car.

Two cowboys did horseplay
by the pool tables,
A waitress asked us
where are you from?
A country-and-western band began to play
"We don't smoke marijuana in Muskokie"
And with the next song,
a couple began to dance.

They held each other like in High School dances
in the fifties;
I recalled when I worked in the woods
and the bars of Madras, Oregon.
That short-haired joy and roughness—
America—your stupidity.
I could almost love you again.

We left—onto the freeway shoulders—
under the tough old stars—
In the shadow of bluffs
I came back to myself,
To the real work, to
"What is to be done."
Turtle Island, 1974

With its upbeat, everyday style, this poem contains a wealth of lexical, structural, and controversial teaching material. It is also utterly contemporary.

Widening the concept of "English poetry"

Further on the question of selection, it should be realized that poetry is a global phenomenon and is not the prerogative of a single nation or geographical area. Wherever English is spoken there is poetry. Although the teacher will feel more comfortable with the works of the local culture, a genuine attempt must be made to enter the international community of English literature. This is a matter of cultural honesty and good professional sense. Try Rabindranath Tagore or Ramanujan of India, John Pepper Clark of Nigeria, Denis Brutus of South Africa, Joseph Kariuki of Kenya, Judith Wright and Kenneth Slessor of Australia, as well as the poetry of Asia, Canada, Britain, and America. Poetry in translation may also be attempted. Students often get a special thrill from hearing their language's poetry professionally translated, and they may serve as enthusiastic informants in subsequent discussion.

Activities for the Poetry Lesson

We may now look more closely at some strategies for the poetry lesson. With correct supervision poetic activities can be a genuine learning experience demanding concentration and emotional involvement while shifting the pedagogical focus from the usual goal of linguisic accuracy (grammar, pronunciation, etc.) to the dynamic use of language itself.

Poetry recital

Alongside the speech-making class try a poetry recital (sometimes making use of the students' own efforts). These need not be dull affairs. Tape the readings and discuss later why the speaker emphasized this point or that point and ask for alternative interpretations. Organize a class panel of judges and award prizes for "the funniest poem," "the saddest poem," "the strangest poem," "the most romantic poem," etc. The judges will be obliged to explain their decisions!

Guided composition

a. Building a Poem. Try this exercise in "brainstorming" a poem:

Step One: The teacher gives a word, for example, *rain*, and the class must think of as many words as possible associated with that word. These are immediately put on the blackboard. The final list may look something like this: *umbrella, clouds, thunder, frogs, raining cats and dogs, singing in the rain, pitter-patter, crashing, monsoon, raincoat, geta*[1] (wooden sandals), *wet, flooding, soaked,* etc.

Step Two. Students must now compose their own poems using the "building blocks" provided. Not only does this exercise produce a useful chart of contextualized vocabulary; it also provides a painless introduction to the mechanics of poetry composition. This poem by an intermediate-level housewife is an example of what can be achieved:

Walking home from the shops
rain   monsoon rain
on the roofs   on my umbrella
on the fields
        a frog
jumps across my path

Ms. Sachiko Ohara

b. Gathering Material. Any object or experience can be a building-block for creative writing. Nicholas Virgilio, the outstanding spokesman for beginning poets, has the following suggestions:

1. Always carry a notebook. Jot down notes on natural phenomena . . . human and nonhuman: experiences, things, plants, animals, anything that strikes you poetically or simply interests you.
2. Compose every day:
   (*a*) Construct a word sketch, with respect to pictorial perspective; whenever possible, place the most prominent object first; always try to present a clear picture.
   (*b*) With real and imagined experience as raw material, utilize all your powers: fancy, imagination, logic, intuition, memory, etc. (*American Haiku*, Vol. II).

Prose conversion

This familiar device is useful as a means of helping one understand what the poem actually says before giving one's own subjective response to it. Instead of making it a writing exercise, put the poem on the blackboard or overhead projector and reconstruct the poem orally (Maher 1980).

Discrimination exercises

Present the poem with certain words blocked out. Underneath have two possible fillers. In choosing the appropriate word, the student must distinguish between, for example, prepositions, verb tenses, and so on.

Poem cartoons

a. A simple way of remembering a poem and providing a game situation is to employ the mental images the poem conjures up. Each student divides a large piece of paper into "cartoon strips" and fills in each frame with either a whole picture or simply selected objects that illustrate in some way one line or phrasal image from the poem. Papers are then exchanged, and each person tries to repeat orally the gist of the poem, using his neighbor's pictorial version.

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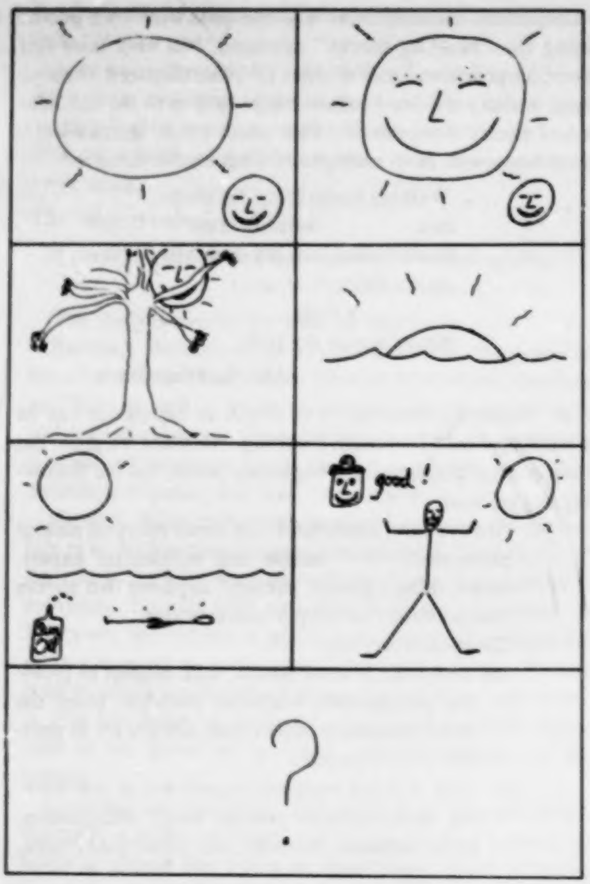
[1] Editor's Note: This is a Japanese word suitable for the author's students in this context.



Come on in Summer!

I like the sun
And the sun likes me
Sometimes it sits on top of
the tree
And sometimes it goes down
into the sea
This summer the sun turned
me black
The doctor says it's good
for my health
Do you agree?

(Poem and cartoon by Akira Watanabe)

b. Use the same procedure as above, except that the cartoon is now cut up into single frames and scrambled. Students are divided into pairs. Each student must give his scrambled set of frames to his partner, who must pick out at random one frame at a time and attempt to recite the appropriate line. Points can be awarded for each correct line. As a final review, each student must arrange his partner's entire cartoon in the correct order, and then recite the poem from the beginning.

Whisper a poem

This is a strategy to help emphasize the importance of clear pronunciation.

Two teams sit in parallel lines with players well spaced out. (This is played better out-of-doors.) The first person at the end whispers the first line of a poem, and this is passed down the line until it reaches the "captain," who writes it down on paper. When both teams have finished, the two versions are put on the blackboard, and the team with the correct version wins a point. And so on until the poem is completed.

Short and humorous poems are well suited to this kind of activity, to prevent boredom from setting in. This Scottish nursery rhyme is a delightful piece to begin with:

The Minister in the Pulpit

The minister in the pulpit
He couldn't say his prayers
He laughed and he giggled
And he fell down the stairs
The stairs gave a crack
And he broke his humpy back
And all the congregation
Went quack, quack, quack.

(Cole 1975)

Or this anonymous nonsense verse:

As I was going out one day
My head fell off and rolled away
But when I saw that it was gone
I picked it up and put it on

And when I got into the street
A fellow cried: "Look at your feet!"
I looked at them and sadly said:
"I've left them both asleep in bed!"

Rhythmic activities for younger learners

a. Hand-Clapping. Rhymes are easily learned when physical actions accompany them, and children particularly enjoy clapping games. The possible complexity of a rhyme is mitigated by the activity itself. The following procedure is suggested:

1. Pupils stand facing each other.
2. Clap own hands.
3. Clap partner's right hand.
4. Clap own hands.
5. Clap partner's left hand.
6. Clap own hands.
7. Slap own thighs.

b. Skipping Rhymes. Use a jump rope with the whole class chanting a rhyme while one person skips the rope.

Here are some rhymes for the activities described above:

Order in the Court

(Traditional English skipping rhyme)

Order in the court
The judge is eating beans
His wife is in the bathtub
Counting submarines.

(Cole 1975)

One Two Three

One two three
Father caught a flea
Put him in the teapot
To make a cup of tea.

(Cole 1975)

Class:
"Tell us your name
Tell us your name
Tell us your name
And we'll let you play again."
Person at the rope:
"My name's Lila/Yoko," etc.

The following rhyme can be useful for learning the months of the year.

Class:
"Apples, peaches, pears and plums
Tell me when your birthday comes."

Person at the rope:
"January, February," etc.

Conclusion

With the qualifications expressed in the introduction to this article, poetry, as I have tried to indicate through examples, deserves to be an integral and unblushing member of the ELT curriculum. It is meaningful for other reasons, too, and in this we may refer to one of the most observable tendencies in recent educational theory and one in which poetry shares a profound interest, namely, the emphasis on the emotional or affective side of learning. This awareness has spilled over into the mainstream of language learning, assisted from within by a reaction against the excesses of behaviorism and its alleged depersonalizing relationships. What may be called the "holistic approach" has taken many forms. Among the best-known are Counseling Learning/Community Language Learning, Silent Way, Suggestopaedia, and Total Physical Response. All have sought to emphasize that learning is not merely an intellectual process; it is one that engages the emotions, the ability to explore and be delighted, the ability to empathize and reflect.

Poetry, too, acknowledges these learning components, and it also recognizes that communication, if it is to rise above the level of disembodied utterance, involves, to use F.C. Billows's phrase, "the adequate expression of all the relevant feelings" (Billows 1961). Poetry, in Dylan Thomas's delightful description, "is what makes you laugh, cry, prickle, be silent, makes your toenails twinkle, makes you want to do this or that or nothing" (Dylan Thomas 1952).

What is essential, therefore, is that students be provided the opportunity to express their whole personalities effectively in the second or foreign language. This process engages the learner in a unique dialogue with his/her feeling system still in the stages of growth in the target language. The poem, moreover, is that ready-made capsule of language that gives the student a manageable form with which to negotiate the expression of that feeling system.

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Should We Pretend? The "Real" Use of Drama in the Classroom

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The various articles dealing with the use of drama in the classroom that have appeared lately in the FORUM alone—Via (1979), Massad (1979), Barker (1979), Gheorghiu (1979), Barnett and Seley (1979), to name just a few—may make redundant a new effort to examine the value of dramatic activities in foreign-language learning. However, the constant and pervasive use of drama by foreign-language teachers of all backgrounds and persuasions shows how profitable such activities are felt to be. Also, the composite nature of drama as an art form suggests many avenues of experimentation and application.

Although there seems to be little dispute over the supposed benefits of drama in teaching English as a foreign language, there are many things in the interdisciplinary field of drama and foreign-language teaching that are taken for granted. There remains, for instance, a need for research to show whether a course with high dramatic content yields better results than one in which the dramatic content is low. As a case in point, Koster (1980), in a skeptical vein, casts doubt on the miracle-working influence of drama when he points out that in many courses oriented toward communicative competence, the teacher and students are "still play-acting." Later, in the same article, he states bluntly that "it is easy enough to tell the student that pretending is part of the game: it is not always that easy to convince him of the relevance of the game."

It is a good point, and his reluctance to accept drama wholeheartedly because of its excessive use of pretending arouses suspicions about certain dramatic techniques which, if not properly applied, turn out to be a means to achieve, at best, amusing parodies of real-life situations or, at worst, awkward and artificially rendered memorizations of such situations.

The association of play-acting with an activity in which insincere make-believe is the dominant element may account for the unwillingness of some teachers, like Koster, to accept drama in the classroom. But we should remember that the whole point about acting is precisely the opposite of insincerity: a convincing portrayal of a character results only if the interpretation is related to experiences with which the actor can identify, either because he has lived through them or because he has imagined them as a sentient, volitional, and thinking being. In much the same way, a foreign-language learner cannot be made to behave insincerely, just copying external models when using language nonnatively; if that happens, his acquired language will never be really meaningful, because he is not convinced that it is a functional means of expression for him—he is not properly motivated to communicate through it.

The actor's training

If the above remarks are valid, any attempt to use acting, or more precisely, interpretation (role playing), as *one* of the means to achieve communicative competence must begin with a clear understanding of certain basic principles of the actor's creative process.

Nobody accepts that talent alone (unless we are dealing with a genius) ensures total development of an individual's creative potential. It follows that an actor's training, like the training of any other professional, contains a series of formative phases organized according to sound educational considerations, such as gradation of content and the well-planned exploration of various possibilities of self-expression in terms of language proper and body movement.

Basically, an actor's preliminary training rests on self-observation. The introspective exercises the would-be actor is required to go through in his formative stage, and which later constitute the fundamental tool in his professional life, cause him to establish a connection between his past experiences and the present world of his inner consciousness. The mosaic of past experiences takes on unsuspected dimensions and colorations when viewed from the perspective of the present. Moreover, the task of communicating past experiences to a group, both verbally and through mimicry, as the acting exercises demand, requires the student to observe with precision the relevant details of the language and the people involved in the experience.

As an illustration of this approach, I will describe certain activities used at the School of Drama, University of Chile, Valparaiso, where I taught drama and worked as a professional actor for a number of years.

The first exercise required each student to delve into his past life and to select experiences that contained material for dramatic exploitation. After all the students had presented their "memoirs" orally, each incident worthy of being made into a communicative sequence was analyzed in detail by all members of the group. The teacher's role was to act as a supervisor, giving advice as to what constituted a potentially interesting—or uninteresting—sequence, and how an experience that sounded flat and unimaginative could be made dramatically exciting by the addition or suppression of details of character and language. The students gradually grasped the essential principle of drama: an individual's most fundamental traits, both positive and negative, are revealed when he is in conflict, facing a force against which he has to take action.

The action referred to here is almost exclusively linguistic, and is formulated according to the relationships of the participants and the setting in which it unfolds. The language to be used is thus determined by the various ways in which the people involved interact, and it is the realization of multiple notions, explicitly or implicitly formulated: showing fear, trying to persuade or dissuade, expressing opinions, and making judgments, to name just a few. It is thus seen that dramatic action is expressed primarily through language; only in extreme cases does such action become physical (as in Westerns and thrillers, which constitute important but minor forms of dramatic expression). It should also be noted that each experience was selected with a view to being structured into what might be termed a "communicative sequence" rather than a fully organized playlet.

The drama approach and the TEFL student

We may conclude from the above that a similar approach might be used (among others) with students who are learning English as a foreign language and who have little opportunity to interact linguistically with native speakers in real-life situations.

While "it appears that similar types of notions are expressed in many different languages" (Dobson 1979), each language expresses notions in a specific way; therefore, if such a "dramatic" approach is used with students of English as a foreign language, the learners will need a considerable amount of help from the teacher, whose main job will be to act as an informant with respect to both linguistic and social plausibility as the need arises, especially when the student is at a loss to formulate aspects of his past experiences relating to the suitability of the language and the people involved in them. To be able to achieve that kind of cultural translation, the teacher-supervisor needs some grounding in drama as an art form, particularly from the actor's point of view. He needs, further, to be aware of the relation between language and society, in addition to being a fairly fluent speaker of the target language. Ideally, available native speakers can be exploited as consultants for this purpose.

The point I wish to make is that a student's use of his acquired language beyond the elementary stages will be meaningful only if he is given the opportunity of "being one's self" (Via 1979), even if the situation in which he is expected to interact is not "real" in a narrow sense. "Real," in this context, has much broader connotations: it relates to total immersion in past experiences which are meaningful not because they are taking place now but because "you were there."

A student who is trying to cope in a foreign language with an imagined reconstruction of past incidents is in a more difficult position than an actor, who does it in his native tongue: he has to undertake a linguistic and cultural translation. This task is impossible without outside help; however, the foreign language student's past is just as vivid and real as the actor's; it is certainly more real than externally imposed sequences, no matter how clearly delineated the various notional categories may be in each case.

Make-believe versus experimental truth

It may be seen, then, that the make-believe aspect of drama is less important than the capacity to use one's imagination as a force that puts the stamp of truth on "communicative sequences." An "emotion recollected in tranquility" (to quote Wordsworth's phrase) is firmly rooted in one's experience: if it is clearly observed and carefully selected for relevant aspects of language and people, it offers the student a better possibility of identification than one that remains alien to him because it does not spring from himself.

Perhaps at an intermediate stage this kind of approach is more suitable than others sometimes used for introducing students to the different notions expressed by the foreign language. To achieve this, the teacher must not forget that (as mentioned above) each language expresses notions differently; but at the same time, the teacher must remember that an approach to meaning based exclusively on the criteria of the target language will fail to make sense if the learner cannot really relate it to himself in a communicative experience.

Classroom activities

The following "stages" are presented as a suggestion for experimentation within the approach described above:

Stage One: Remembering an Incident. The student is asked to remember and narrate a past experience. The account need not be excessively long and detailed: a short passage offers ample possibilities to work with. It is, in fact, advisable to keep it fairly vague and sketchy so that it provides a good starting point for the subsequent stage.

Example: "When I was about eleven years old, I cut my foot badly when trying to cross a shallow stream. I had walked away from the picnic area with a friend of mine. I do not remember having let my parents know that we were going for a walk, and they were very angry when I got back."

Stage Two: Clarification of Relevant Details. This part involves extensive participation by the students in the form of questions of all sorts so as to make sure that no unexplored possibilities are left in the previous narrative account.

Example: What did you cut your foot with? How did you feel when you cut it? When did you realize that you had cut it badly? Why did you try to cross the stream? What made you walk away from the picnic area? What time was it? etc.

The answers to the questions (and the above list is by no means exhaustive) help students in two important ways: (1) they help them clarify certain aspects in the narration that may appear hazy and sketchy; (2) they provide the basic information out of which they can select the elements that will eventually be transmuted into actual spoken lines.

Stage Three: Tentative Improvisation. The students are now in a better position to have a go at the first improvisation, since the story has become "theirs." It it obvious that the student who has undergone the experience will feel more at ease as the "leading" character in the sequence.

It is at this stage that the teacher-supervisor-informant's role becomes important. However, it is advisable at first not to interrupt, and to allow for a certain lack of appropriateness and correctness in both structural and situational aspects of the language used.

When the students attempt a second improvisation, they can integrate the comments made by the teacher and students. The teacher's role becomes more prominent now: his comments include fundamental observations in relation to the notions and to all other aspects of the speech act (segmental, suprasegmental, grammatical, lexical, etc.) in the light of the particular situation in which they occur.

Example:

(at the picnic area)

A: I feel like swimming. Let's go in.
B: I don't feel like it; I'm hot, but it's too crowded here.
A: Let's try and find somewhere nicer down the river.
B: O.K. But are you sure it's safe?
A: Oh, yes!
B: O.K. Then let's go.

(further down the river)

A: I'm afraid we'll have to wade across the stream. The other side looks much easier to walk on.
B: Yes, it does. But I don't like the idea; I can't see the bottom.
A: Come on in!
B: It's quite warm. Oh!
A: What's wrong?
B: I think I've hurt my foot.
A: Where?
B: Here.
A: Oh, yes. It's not a big cut, though.

etc.

After this stage, the sequence becomes "fixed" as a dialogue and can be optionally treated as such. A collection of such dialogues might be used as a starting point for more advanced considerations about cultural differences between L_1 and L_2.

Much more than pretending

Although the above discussion and illustration seem to make fairly obvious points about the link between drama and foreign-language teaching, it should be stressed that no believable utterance will surface from the student's mind if he is not actually involved in it. Recreating one's own past offers one possibility for sounding "real and plausible": lines will emerge from inner experiences. If an alternative

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Efficiency in Language Teaching

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PENNY UR writes, "I came to live in Israel, on Kibbutz Machanayim, in 1967, and have been teaching ever since, mostly EFL at elementary and high-school levels. A holder of an M.A. from Oxford University in Oriental studies and of a Post-Graduate Certificate of Education from Cambridge University, she has had articles appear in *Modern English Teacher* (London), and a book, *Discussions that Work: Task-centered Fluency Practice*, published by Cambridge University Press in 1981.

We want to make our teaching better. How do we do it?

The obvious answer is: by improving our methodology; by studying, practicing, keeping up with the literature on the subject, and so on. But it is not as simple as that. The study and use of "accredited" teaching methods does not bring about effective teaching and learning unless subordinated to the principle of *efficiency*—that is, the attainment of the maximum profit (in terms of achieved learner proficiency) for the minimum cost (in terms of the teacher's and learners' time and effort).

METHODOLOGY

Of all the variables that contribute to a class's success in learning a language, the method used may be one of the least significant. Jakobovits (1970) gives one set of such variables which he divides into learner, instructional, and sociocultural factors. *Learner factors* include such things as linguistic ability, intelligence, and motivation; *sociocultural factors* include language loyalty, ethnocentrism, and anomie; *instructional factors* include the frequency, length, and distribution of lessons, the number of students in the class, the teacher's knowledge and personality, expected interference from the native language, available teaching aids, and strategy.

Only the last two items—aids and strategy—bear any relation to methodology. It is all the others that mainly determine the success or failure of a course; method, then, seems relatively unimportant.

The above conclusion is borne out by studies that have found a definite relation between foreign-language learning and such factors as motivation (Lambert 1967) or language aptitude (Carroll 1965), but little or none between achievement and method. As Jakobovits says: "Numerous studies in the last twenty-five years or so have attempted to resolve the issue of the effectiveness of various methods of foreign-language teaching, none of which has been adequate enough to permit any definitive conclusion." (See also Brumfit 1977 for a comprehensive description of the difficulties in making methodological studies.) If method were a significant variable in foreign-language instruction, we should expect comparative studies of different methods, such as the Scherer-Wertheimer experiment (Scherer-Wertheimer 1962), to yield more or less unequivocal results. As it is, we must conclude that the choice of method has relatively little effect.

Where does that leave us? Does it really not matter which method we use?

Of course it matters. But not because one method is intrinsically better than another, or because the right choice of teaching strategy will make a drastic difference in learner achievement. It matters, first of all, because even the apparently small difference that the right choice makes is significant in terms of overall results. Selecting a more effective strategy will not make a class of failures into a class of brilliant overachievers, but it may shift them up a point or two, which, especially for the marginal ones, may make all the difference.

It matters, secondly, because, small as it is, it is the only variable over which we, the teachers, have control. All the others are beyond us: there is not much we can do about a slow learner, an overcrowded classroom, or prejudice against the language we teach; but we can adapt our method to the setting in such a way that, within the conditions imposed on us, we can reach our goals with maximum efficiency.

Thirdly, method can make lessons more interesting and have a positive effect on intrinsic motivation. (This is borne out to some extent by the Scherer-Wertheimer experiment.) This added motivation may not be reflected as much as we would like in actual progress, but it is valuable in itself.

Variety, choice and conflict

Today the methodology student or beginning teacher is confused by a multitude of recommended approaches to language teaching, each carrying its battery of classroom techniques: the grammar-translation method with its lists of translated vocabulary and complex grammatical rules and exceptions; the audiolingual method with its drills and choral work; cognitive code-learning with its inductive and deductive exercises; the functional-notional method with its situational dialogues and communication games—to name but a few. This wide spectrum of methods and the rich choice of accompanying materials is not in itself a bad thing. What *is* bad is the fact that one method is usually supported at the expense of another. Arguments are too often polemic: "His method is wrong and detrimental; mine is good because it corrects all his mistakes." The teacher is left with the implied conclusion that there is a "right" and a "wrong" method; and by a dangerous corollary, she is led to feel that if she is using a "wrong" method, she must be a bad teacher. How many of us, since the grammar-translation method became disreputable, have felt guilty about using so obvious a tactic as translation in our lessons?

Some comforting books and articles have discussed this problem (Strevens 1977, Finocchiaro 1975, Mullins 1980, Close 1977, Marckwardt 1975)—all reassuring us that we are not alone in our confusion, and that the choice is ours. But they give no real answer to such questions as "How do I choose?" or "How far may I be eclectic?"

Summary

This brings us back to the question asked at the beginning of this article, to which books and articles on methodology give no clear-cut answer, and may even be misleading. They give us an inflated idea of the importance of method in the teaching-learning process; they inculcate in us the dubious notion that there are methods that are intrinsically "better" or "worse"; they (unintentionally) belittle our own healthy intuitions about what will or will not "work" for us; they provide us with a wealth of possibilities but no standard by which to judge which we should use or in what combination.

But we must somehow, sometime, choose our teaching strategy, tactic, aid. How do we do it?

EFFICIENCY

The overriding principle of the teaching-learning process should be *efficiency*. Or, to put it another way: within the given conditions of my teaching task, how can I achieve my aims with the most favorable ratio of profit (achieved proficiency) to cost (time and work). Efficiency thus makes two prior claims on the teacher: to assess her teaching conditions and to state her aims. Only after she has done this can she choose her strategy.[1] At this stage, but not before, she may exploit her methodological knowledge in order to choose appropriate and effective techniques.

Teaching conditions

Teaching conditions include the physical and temporal organization of the course, the background, character, age, and abilities of the learners, the personality, knowledge, and abilities of the teacher.

When considering the *physical and temporal organization* of the course, the teacher must ask herself such questions as: How many students are there in the class? What is the room and furniture like? What teaching materials and aids are available? How many lessons do I have a week? At what times? How long is a lesson? How much homework is acceptable here? What extracurricular activities may help or interfere with my course? How much preparation time will I have?

The background, character, age, and abilities of the learners are found out in part as the teacher goes along; but much of this is usually known before the course starts—the age of the students, their sociocultural background, their native language, and its likely interference effects. Exactly how motivated they are, what discipline problems there may be, how they react to specific teacher tactics—this is all learned later by experience.

The personality, knowledge, and abilities of the teacher are, we hope, more or less known to herself, but it behooves her to do a little self-assessment along these lines: How well do I know the language I am required to teach? What are my shortcomings and strong points as a teacher? What is the range of techniques I have at my disposal (i.e., that I have used or know I could if I wanted to)?

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[1] I prefer to use Jakobovits's term *strategy* rather than *method*, as the latter term has come to be associated with certain approaches that comprise specific sets of techniques, whereas *strategy* is not so bound.

Aims and objectives

The formulation of aims is only partly the province of the teacher. Often she must teach a course for which the materials are specified, or one that leads to a specific exam, with a set of objectives already implied; or she may teach an ESP course linked to a particular subject and set of skills. But in other cases, particularly in elementary-school teaching where the subject is EGP (English for General Purposes), the teacher may have to formulate her own aims. These should be expressed in terms of the terminal skills and abilities (Widdowson 1978) expected of the pupils.[2] But whether or not the teacher has to formulate her own long-term aims, she is the one who must break them down into immediate objectives, guided by whatever course materials she is using.

For example, one of the aims of a school course may be a certain level of proficiency in day-to-day conversation, but the objective of a particular set of lessons may be the acquisition of the ability to ask questions in order to elicit information, and a still more limited objective may be the increase of fluency in the use of such questions. The more short-term the objective, the greater the responsibility of the teacher for its formulation and achievement.

The aims and objectives of a course are bound to be affected considerably by the teaching conditions enumerated in the previous section.

Deciding on strategy

Having clear in her mind both the teaching situation and the aims of the course, the teacher is now ready to use all her knowledge of and experience with different methods, psychological theory, and linguistics in choosing a strategy that will be maximally effective.

Being unable in an article of this length to describe an entire teaching situation, I shall deal with certain aspects of a teaching situation and course aims, and suggest some [illegible] their practical implications for efficient classroom strategy. My approach will naturally be idiosyncratic: I do not mean this to be a recipe, but an example of the process by which decisions may be made.

Let's say that I want to teach a set of lexical items to one of my classes in preparation for an instructional television program. The class is a group of elementary-school children of mixed ability (1), with fairly high motivation, well disciplined, with good learning habits, but whose first language is totally unrelated to English (1*a*). I have at my disposal blackboard and chalk (2) and an overhead projector, which is a hundred meters away and would have to be brought in and returned (3). The course is aimed at the acquisition of both oral and written skills and abilities, as a basis for more specific courses later (4). The class meets in the early morning, so the children will be fresh and at their most receptive during the first few minutes of the lesson (5). Their attention span is not very long (they are ten-year-olds) (6), and I know from experience that the number of new items they can absorb at a sitting is not more than eight or ten (see 1*a* above). They get frustrated and restless if they lose the thread of what I am saying or do not understand for any length of time; the meanings of the items must therefore be made clear quickly (7). My knowledge of methods and psychology teaches me that distributed, varied learning is most effective (Orme 1978); that material that is reinforced visually is absorbed better than that which is presented by oral means alone (9); that material which children work over and reproduce in meaningful combinations of their own is learned more thoroughly (Stevick 1970) (10); and so on. I know also, from my own experience, that when children learn the spellings of words, for some reason they learn the meanings better, too (11).

Therefore, linking my methodological conclusions by number to the situation described above: Out of a total of twenty-five possible new items for the telecast, I choose ten for active mastery (1*a*) and present them briefly (6) at the beginning of the lesson (5), returning to them again at the middle and at the end (8). I display their written form (9), probably on the blackboard, as it is not worth bringing the overhead projector all that distance for the short time I would use it (3). I present the meanings first through illustration, if possible, or target-language analogy or explanation, and then give native-language equivalents to make sure all have understood (7). I get the children to compose their own utterances about the material, linking these to a communicative situation (10). I ask them to learn the spelling of the words for homework (4)(11), assigning fewer for the slower learners and adding extra words for the quicker ones (1).

The above illustration gives only some of the simplest and most obvious factors to be taken into account, and their application in practice. In a real situation there are many more: their scope is wider, their nature more complex, and their interaction more involved than I have shown. But I am not trying here to give an exhaustive exposition of the idea of efficiency, only to present a principle, the implications of which teachers will work out for themselves. The complexity and number of the factors to be considered when planning efficient strategy is daunting; however, this is often in fact done intuitively. One hears teachers say things like "That will work well in *my* class," or "*He* can teach through role-play; I know *I* can't," or "Can't do that in *our* school; rules forbid it"—all of which are practical comments on aspects of the efficiency of different techniques.

In fact, each separate premise and conclusion in the illustration is obvious and simple: a matter of common sense. And efficiency *is* a matter of common sense; that is all it is.

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[2] One such detailed formulation of aims, in terms of notions and functions, is given in *The Threshold Level* (van Ek 1978).

Foreign languages are often taught inefficiently simply because teachers do not stop and think and work out these common-sense conclusions for themselves; they have no time or energy, or they rely to much on methods recommended by the "experts," or they lack the necessary self-confidence.

Or perhaps they just have not thought of it. I hope now they will.

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approach is used—namely, that of providing the student with an incident in which he has not taken part—a way must be found to relate the emotions, attitudes, points of view, etc., in that incident to similar ones in the student's life. This kind of connection is vital to an actor's craft: it is not enough just to tell the student to be "an angry policeman" or "a disgusted housewife": he must recreate such emotions from his inner resources and then transfer them to the sequences suggested by the teacher.

I have presented these observations with a view to experimenting with students who share a similar language and cultural environment. This has in fact proved suitable as *one* possible approach to the problem of communication with such students. If a similar approach is used with students of mixed language and cultural backgrounds, the implications are different. But even in this latter instance it is important to remember that to attain convincing foreign-language performance is no easy matter; it involves infinitely more than just pretending: it rests on clear self-observation; it involves a sustained effort to project ourselves imaginatively into the foreign language and culture. After all, bridging the gap between cultures is what the problem is all about. ☐

WHEN I HEARD THE LEARN'D ASTRONOMER

When I heard the learn'd astronomer;
When the proofs, the figures, were ranged in columns
    before me;
When I was shown the charts and the diagrams, to add,
    divide, and measure them;
When I, sitting, heard the astronomer, where he lec-
    tured with much applause in the lecture-room,
How soon, unaccountable, I became tired and sick;
Till rising and gliding out, I wander'd off by myself,
In the mystical moist night-air, and from time to time,
Look'd up in perfect silence at the stars.

WALT WHITMAN

Information Transfer for Listening and Reading

DAVID M. PALMER
British Institute in Portugal

DAVID PALMER recently became assistant head of the Department of Modern Languages at the École des Cadres, Courbevoie, France, after a stint as director of studies at the British Institute in Lisbon, where this article was written. He has taught ESP at the University of Tabriz, Iran and ELT methodology and linguistics at Damavand College, Tehran, where he was chairman of the Department of English Language until early 1979. He is currently doing error-analysis research on the written English of Iranian EFL students.

We are all constantly exposed to information in various forms. It is probably true to say that concentrated "institutional" information is presented to us more frequently in a visual symbolic form and less frequently in a purely linguistic form than ever before. Sometimes a schematic or symbolic presentation may be almost universally intelligible; sometimes the information is only partially visual, being supplemented by condensed linguistic information and therefore less widely communicative. Both kinds of presentation can provide the language teacher with a useful source of material for information-transfer activities. By an information-transfer activity I mean an activity involving the reproduction of information either into a fully linguistic form from a diagrammatic or semi-diagrammatic form, or vice versa.

Advantages of information transfer

Authenticity: Information-transfer activities can use authentic realia from the English-speaking environment.

Real Tasks: The transfer activity itself is an authentic task in that native speakers commonly do it in the normal course of their everyday lives. For example, the railway clerk at the Train Inquiries Office constantly transfers his own semi-diagrammatic timetables into linguistic information for members of the public who telephone about train times. They, in their turn, probably note down that information in a semi-schematic way rather than in its full linguistic form.

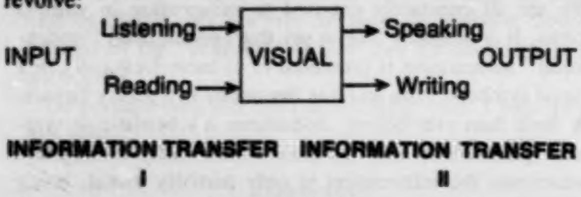
Communicative Tasks: Because these are real tasks they are also communicative—otherwise people wouldn't be wasting their time doing them. When you book your flight at the travel agent, you rely on the clerk to interpret the information he sees on his computer screen and communicate it to you.

Repetitive Tasks: Information presented in a diagrammatic form is frequently, by nature, a concentrated collection of similar items of information—for example, our train timetable tells us repeatedly when a train will depart from, stop at, and arrive at a limited number of places. This means that the linguistic equivalent may well be expressed by repetition of a certain structure. In this way, information-transfer activities can be very appropriate to the controlled-practice stage of a lesson.

Productive Tasks: The material to be transferred into linguistic form provides a student with only the bare bones of information. He must supply the linguistic flesh with which the information will be expressed. Thus, if it is appropriately staged, an information transfer can fit into the free production stage of a lesson.

This article is an adaptation of a paper given by the author at the Lisbon TESOL Conference, April 1980.

Develop All Skills: **Ideally, an information transfer forms a kind of pivot around which any of the language skills may revolve:**



The figure above shows how a diagram or "visual" may be built up from information read or heard by the student. The visual then becomes the basis of a second information transfer in which the student reproduces the information linguistically in either a spoken or written mode.

This article is concerned chiefly with the input end of this process, the first information transfer.

Self Access: Information Transfer I can provide useful self-access activities for developing listening and reading skills, since the student can check his performance against the "correct" visual. This nonlinguistic correction key minimizes the proofreading errors that are inherent in linguistic answer keys.

Basic Information-Transfer Strategies Used for Listening and Reading

Information transfer tasks fall into a number of basic categories, which can be realized through a number of scenarios, often at several language levels.

Maps and plans

In this type the student has to label, mark positions, or plot routes on a map or a plan.

Selected Scenarios
(L=Listening; R=Reading)

INPUT	TASK
1. Classroom Description of students' seating in a classroom (L,R)	Label desks with names of appropriate students.
2. Street Description (R) or "overheard" dialogue (L) giving information about houses and occupants in a street	Label street plan with appropriate information.
3. Holiday tour Overheard dialogue, recounting or planning a holiday (L), travel agent's itinerary (R), postcard from family on holiday (R)	Plot route on map, labeling places of interest and dates.
4. Architect's plan Overheard dialogue containing information about rooms and contents (L), estate agent's blurb on house for sale or flat for rent (R)	Label rooms and positions of furniture on plan.
5. Underground directions[1] Dialogue between traveler and underground inquiries office asking for directions (L)	Plot route on authentic underground map.
6. Theater seats Dialogue between customers and booking clerk at theater box office (L)	Plot seats sold on seating plan of theater.
7. Weather forecast Authentic radio weather forecast (L)	Enter weather symbols on a map.
8. Accident report Authentic insurance society's[2] accident-report form with prose report of traffic accident (R)	Draw diagram of accident, showing position and direction of vehicles in the space provided on the form.
Dialogue between police officer and motorist after the accident, or between lawyer and motorist in court (L) (More difficult)	As above.
Dialogue between angry motorists just after the accident (L) (Advanced)	As above.
9. Flight routes Newspaper report (R) or interview (L) with director general of an airline, giving details of new routes, closures, etc.	Plot routes on world map.
10. Seating plan Description (L or R) of guests seated at a dinner party (Probably more appropriate to a literary register)	Label guests on diagram of table.

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[1] Editor's Note: *Underground=subway* (in American English).

[2] Editor's Note: *Insurance society*=insurance company.

Notes:

It is quite often possible to provide the same basic information input at a number of different language levels. For example, the description of the seating in Scenario X can be quite elementary, as in:

> "Mr. Brown is sitting at the head of the table. On his left is Mrs. Smith, and on his right is Mr. White. Mr. Green is sitting on Mrs. Smith's left."

Or it can employ more complex discourse, in which case the difficulty of the task is increased as the student has to filter out redundant information as well as recognize the functions of complex cohesive devices, as in:

> "Mrs. Jones, a bit of a gossip, is sitting opposite Mr. Green, talking to her old friend Mr. Smith, who's sitting on her right. Mrs. Smith, however, is talking right across the table to Mr. White, the tall, white-haired gentleman on the other side of Mrs. Jones."

This becomes a bit of a puzzle, and indeed might be set as a problem-solving reading task in which the student has to seat the guests amicably according to their likes and dislikes. For example:

> "Lady Grey is quite a snob and insists on sitting in the place of honor at the head of the table. She is very jealous of Miss Sidebotham because they both like Mr. Gable, a bachelor," etc.

Grids and tables

These are better described as semi-diagrammatic, and include railway timetables, care-hire price lists, or any kind of information analyzed into tabular form.

Selected Scenarios

INPUT	TASK
1. Passport details	
Interview at passport office (L)	Fill in "personal details" page of passport.
Police or literary description of person (R)	
2. Flight announcements	
Authentic recording of airport announcements (L)	Complete an empty or semi-complete "flight announcements" board.
3. Poll forms	
Dialogues between members of the public and sociological survey or market-research interviewers (L)	Complete the kinds of poll forms the interviewer would have. In an English-speaking environment the input might be "live" comments, the task being to actually interview members of the public. When this kind of "realia" is not available, students can interview each other or another class.
4. Train or bus timetables	
Telephone inquiries answered by railway/bus inquiry office (L)	Complete a semicomplete timetable with destinations or times given in the dialogue.
5. Football results and pools	
Authentic radio recording of the football results, or, at a more advanced level, randomly organized recording of outside broadcast commentators giving the results of their particular matches (L)	Complete a newspaper list of results or a pools coupon.
Newspaper report of the day's football games (R)	As above.
6. Class timetable	
Recording of teacher telling his class their new timetable in the first lesson of the term (L)	Plot lessons on blank timetable.
7. Class attendance	
Recording of teacher talking to his class just before the end-of-term exams. He discusses their attendance, who was away, when, for how long, etc. (L)	Complete an authentic attendance register.
8. Pop group	
Magazine article on pop group (R)	Tabulate information in simplified form.
Any other kind of personal information survey taken over a group of people	

Diagrams and charts

This kind of material, already extensively used in ESP courses, can with careful selection be equally effective in general English classes.

Selected Scenarios

INPUT	TASK
1. Family tree	
Prose description of family relations; e.g., history text (R) or clues given in conversation (L)	Plot names on family tree, or draw tree itself.

2. Temperature and climate	
Graphs and Histograms	Complete temperature graph or rainfall histogram, or mark names of places on comparative graphs.
Geography lecture (L)	
Tourist text (R)	
Conversation at travel agent's office (L)	
3. Pie graphs	
Interview with farmer talking about land use (L)	Complete or label pie graphs.
Economics, geographical, demographical, sociological, etc., texts (R)	
Politicians giving pre-election policy on budget allocations (L)	
4. Sociograms	
Text on exponents of likes and dislikes in talking about personal relationships (R)	Piece together a sociogram by writing names of characters in circles and drawing arrows between the circles to indicate friendships and other kinds of relationships.
Several recorded snippets of people talking about their likes and dislikes vis-à-vis other people (L)	
5. Flow charts	
Tour of factory, showing how, for example, cars are made (L)	Label and possibly complete diagram illustrating the process.
Recipe instructions (R)	As above.
Lecture on process, such as education system (L)	
Semi-technical texts on processes; e.g., photography, houseplant care, operating a washing machine, applying for a tax rebate (R)	As above.
Bank clerk telling customer how to get his traveler's checks changed (L)	As above.

Lectures may be given live by the teacher, who should deliver them from notes, rather than read them, in order to retain the redundancy feature of spoken language.

Diaries and calendars

Transfers involving plans, dates, and times, often give useful practice in discriminating numbers at less advanced levels.

Selected Scenarios

INPUT	TASK
1. Office holidays	
Employees ask boss for permission to take their holidays at certain times. (L)	Plot holidays on year planner.
Employees write letters to boss on same subject. (R)	As above.
2. Professional appointment book	
Patients call doctor's or dentist's (etc.) receptionist and arrange appointment. (L)	Record in or complete appointments book.
3. Personal engagements	
Secretary tells boss his program for the week. (L) Some of this information may come in the form of letters or memos to be processed by the students. (R)	Enter details in authentic diary.
4. Hotel bookings	
Receptionist at a hotel receives telephone calls reserving rooms. (L)	Record details—name, dates, room number, facilities required, etc.—on hotel register.
Letters making reservations. (R)	

Notes:

1. Writing down information from overheard telephone calls is good preparation for the indispensable skill of taking telephone messages. Very realistic telephone recordings can be made by using two extension phones and a microphone in the same room. Hold the microphone close to the earpiece of one of the phones, as well as at normal recording distance from the speaker who is receiving the phone message.

2. Remember that some of these tasks can be very much simplified by giving some of the linguistic information to the student before asking him to do the listening task. For example, in Scenario 3 the engagements that are given orally by the secretary can also be given in jumbled order on the student's worksheet. His task is then to recognize them and copy them into the right days of the week as he listens.

Miscellaneous lists, forms, coupons, etc.

The basic strategies used in the above scenarios can be extended and combined to suit a wide range of situations and visual formats. A selection is given below.

INPUT	TASK
1. Program design	
Conversation at theater-booking agency (L)	Design a program or poster giving full details about the play or film.
Radio advertisement for play or film (L)	
2. Menu prices	
Dialogue between couple dining and waiter (L)	Write or complete details on menu.
Gastronomic newspaper article (R)	
3. Diet list	
Doctor advises patient on diet.(L)	Write diet list. (Elementary)
Health food text. (R)	Could be developed into a fairly advanced selection and summary exercise, depending on the complexity of the prose and the amount of superfluous information to be filtered out.
4. Shopping list	
Wife sending husband on errand (L)	Write shopping list.
Recipe instructions (R)	
5. Car rental and other order forms	
Phone conversations (L) or prosy letters (R)	Fill in authentic forms. These combine tables, calendars, and even maps, and sometimes involve multiple-choice discrimination, as well as actual language production. Their relevance to students' needs even outside an ESL situation should not be underestimated.

DEVISING INFORMATION-TRANSFER TASKS

It is probably easier to start with the authentic visual rather than with the input material, and to construct the task around the visual. Suitable visual material can be found in encyclopedias, publicity brochures, transport timetables, atlases, sociology or general-science textbooks, *Time* and similar newspapers and magazines, as well as many EFL textbooks, some of which are listed below. Select a visual that will clearly provide material for the structure or language function you wish to teach or practice in the follow-up to the initial reading or listening task. It may be necessary to adapt or rework the visual to suit the task, or simply to allow students enough space to write in the information, but an authentic diagram or table, with information erased, will probably provide greater motivation.

The input material should also be as realistic as possible. A passage of read prose is unlikely to be suitable for a listening task, and a dialogue is equally inappropriate to a reading task. Ask students to listen for information they would reasonably expect to listen for in the real world: the facts in an argument about a car accident or a sociological lecture, the scores in a football-results broadcast, the times, airlines, flight numbers, and gate numbers in an airport announcement. Apply the same kind of criteria to reading tasks, and in both cases try to avoid artificial language or language situations. The railway-inquiry clerk, for example, is most unlikely to give one inquirer the times of all the trains between London and Doncaster, or the times of their arrival at every intervening station, but in the course of several inquiries he might reasonably give out a fair amount of the information.

Finally, remember to test the material on yourself or your colleagues before letting your students loose on it. You are almost certain to find inaccuracies and ambiguities, as well as ways of improving or extending the task.

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I hung my verses in the wind,
Time and tide their faults may find,
All were winnowed through and through,
Five lines lasted sound and true;
Five were smelted in a pot
Than the South more fierce and hot;
These the siroc could not melt,
Fire their fiercer flaming felt,
And the meaning was more white
Than July's meridian light.
Sunshine cannot bleach the snow,
Nor time unmake what poets know.
Have you eyes to find the five
Which five hundred did survive?

RALPH WALDO EMERSON

The Exchange Box

WALLACE W. SMITH
Seikei University, Japan

WALLACE W. SMITH first went to Japan in 1945 as an interpreter for the United States Army. He later worked as a translator, and has been teaching at various Japanese universities for more than twenty years. Mr. Smith has been active in special English training seminars for students, teachers, businessmen, and government officials. He "writes articles for local teaching journals, gives demonstrations at junior and senior high schools, writes textbooks, advises his school's Spiritualism Research Study Group, helps coach the tennis team, gives cooking lessons to interested students, putters in his garden, and travels extensively."

Good teachers of English are always looking for ways to make their classes more interesting, to increase their students' knowledge of foreign countries, and to provide ways for their students to practice their English. There are many activities that are often used—games, songs, pen pals, guest speakers, movies, slides, discussions, debates. To this list, I would like to add another: the exchange box.

What is an "exchange box"?

Basically, an exchange box is a box prepared by an English class or club here in Japan and sent to a similar age group in an English-speaking country. In the box there are a large number of items that relate closely to student life. At the same time, the school abroad prepares a similar box and sends it to the school here.

It should be easy to find a school to exchange a box with. Foreign friends, chambers of commerce, embassies, cultural offices, perhaps even airlines can help find such a school. If these sources fail, a letter to the mayor of a town or to the editor of the local newspaper in a foreign country may be successful. When choosing a place to exchange a box with, we should remember that there are many English-speaking countries in the world—not just the United States and England. A class or club might consider exchanging a box with a similar group in Canada, New Zealand, Australia, India, Pakistan, Malaysia, South Africa, or the Philippines.

Basic preparation

Even before the exchange partner has been decided on, a good deal of basic preparation of the box can be done. Jobs can be assigned, items to be included can be considered, costs can be thought about, time schedules for packing and mailing decided, and even publicity for the project arranged for. Local newspapers and TV stations are often interested in activities of this kind.

Before considering what to put in the box, let me offer a few words about what *not* to put in the box. The box should be a school project, primarily representing the students and their lives, secondarily reflecting the surrounding community, and only minimally representing the country and the society as a whole. Materials that reinforce mistakes and stereotypes should be avoided. In a box from a Japanese class, for example, pictures of geisha in kimono twirling their parasols under the cherry blossoms while gazing at Mt. Fuji are inappropriate today, particularly so from junior high school students, who have probably never seen a real geisha. Further, articles that insult the intelligence and economic standard of living of the exchange class must scrupulously be excluded. Some years ago, an American high school social-studies class sent us here in Japan a box con-

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This article first appeared in the January, 1977, issue of *Yamagata-ken, Eigo Kyoiku*, a publication of the Yamagata Prefectural English Teachers' Association. Reprinted with permission.

taining, among other things, bars of soap, pieces of cotton cloth, and pictures of girls wearing blouses and skirts. The articles of clothing were labeled with arrows, and underneath the pictures was written "American girls like to wear blouses and skirts." Did the American students really think that we in Japan didn't know what soap was, that Japan didn't use cotton cloth ("Ah, yes, all Japanese dress in silk kimono!"), or that Japanese girls were unfamiliar with skirts and blouses? From such mistakes and ignorance come international misunderstanding, the prevention of which is one of the goals in our English teaching. Certainly, if soap is made in a factory in the town and several fathers of the students work there, or if cotton mills are the main industry of the town, soap samples and cotton cloth samples indeed could be included in the box. But the reason for including them should be carefully explained.

Another word of caution is necessary. In their first rush of enthusiasm, students often try to prepare too big a box. It is better for students to do reasonably simple things and succeed brilliantly than to try too difficult things and turn out ill-conceived, poorly executed materials. This is especially true for the first box; in the second and third years of the project, students can aspire to bigger and better boxes.

Contents of the box

Now, let us consider what might be included in the box. Items to send to the other country will, of course, depend greatly on the age, experience, interest, and financial resources of the students. The following ideas are only suggestions; admittedly, some of them are difficult and costly. But this list is only a beginning. Alert teachers and students will undoubtedly find other items to include.

1. Letters or themes written by students can be pasted in a scrapbook. The topics covered should all be different and should concern the student's daily life.

2. Photographs can be put in an album. Buildings alone are not enough; people should be included. Laboratories, gymnasiums, lunchrooms, even washrooms are good places for pictures. If students do not have cameras, perhaps one can be borrowed from a local camera shop. Or a teacher may have one. Informal pictures should be stressed. Explanations of the pictures must be included.

3. A box of 35-mm colored slides is useful. The same remarks about the photographs apply here, too. A collection of from thirty to thirty-five good slides is far better than a large number of out-of-focus, unbalanced pictures. If the students are especially adventurous, a tape recording can be made to accompany the slides instead of a written description.

4. Famous local products can be included in the box. Whether these products are folk craft or industrial, they should relate closely to the school and to the students' lives. They all should be carefully labeled to show what relation they have to the project.

5. A movie may be included. Naturally, an 8-mm black-and-white movie is perfectly suitable. Perhaps a teacher or the father of a student has a movie camera that might be borrowed. A tape recording to accompany the movie is not impossible for university students.

6. A tape can be included. Tape recorders are common in Japanese schools, and many junior high school pupils are adept at using them. Speeches by students alone are boring; sounds of the community should be included—bells, delivery trucks, musical sirens, garbage trucks, police cars, pachinko parlors,[1] ambulances, train stations. A tape is audial, not visual, and it should be lively and the sounds distinctive. The explanations of the sounds by students will give the necessary practice in speaking English.

7. Copies of the school's English textbooks are interesting. Personal notes about the various lessons would be fun to read.

8. The school's daily schedule can be included.

9. If the school uses a uniform, how about including a complete set? At the least, pictures of students wearing a school uniform must be included. Even a school cap would be fun to send.

10. If the school publishes an English-language magazine or newspaper, copies should be included. A native-language newspaper might be included, but since the purpose of the exchange is English, the class should consider this item carefully before including it.

11. Pictures from the school's art classes might be included. Handicraft items and articles from the manual training class are interesting. A biology class might even contribute local wild flowers, leaves, and seeds, which have been pressed and labeled (in English, of course!), along with pictures of the items growing wild.

12. A history of the town and the school would be fun to read. Important events, such as fires, earthquakes, floods, visits by the Emperor and the Crown Prince, should be noted. A geographical and economic study of the school and the town is useful. Charts and graphs can show the school's population by age, sex, height, weight, hobbies, club membership, and activities after graduation.

13. Copies of tests and examinations for English (and mathematics too) are good, especially those examinations to the next higher level of schooling.

14. The school's chorus could make a tape recording of the school song. The words of the song and a free translation should accompany the recording.

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[1] *Pachinko:* a Japanese gambling game somewhat resembling a pinball machine.

15. The school lunchroom could provide the menus for a week. Or students could provide a list of the items that they bring in their own lunches.

16. The school's cooking class might prepare a recipe for a simple and common native dish, which the foreign students could make. The recipe must be in English, of course, and can be accompanied by pictures and captions, showing the steps in its preparation. Don't forget to include pictures of students eating it afterwards!

17. You might include some article of clothing typical of your area or country, or directions for making it, with photographs of the finished product modeled by the students.

18. Sports equipment and pictures are interesting to include. Certainly there is no need to send a baseball or basketball to America, but special sports typical of the country are valuable.

The above list is by no means exhaustive, and students' imagination and enthusiasm should be encouraged in finding other items to include in the box.

A final word

Now that all is prepared, it is usually wise to have everything looked at by a native speaker of English, or by someone with a good command of English. This person should *not* edit or correct, but should merely point out those rough places where the meaning does not come through. It is, after all, a student project, and erratic but meaningful English is better than polished, unnaturally good (and therefore suspicious) English.

Finally, when all is ready, publicity should be arranged. Can the project be displayed in the city hall for a few days? Can it be displayed in the town library or in a store window? Can students sit by the exhibit to explain it to passersby? Can a TV or radio program be arranged to demonstrate the project and the materials contained in the box? A newspaper story, at the least, is necessary. Likewise, when the box comes from the foreign country, its contents should be displayed publicly, not just in one school classroom.

One final word of caution, this time to the teacher: Conscientious teachers, in their desire to make the project successful, are apt to turn the box into their own activity. A teacher must indeed push, cajole, persuade, perhaps even reward students so as to make sure that the project is successful. But in the end, a successful exchange box is of the students, by the students, and for the students. □

AN INVITATION

We invite readers to send us a brief essay (200–400 words) about what being a teacher of English means to you. You may wish to touch on one or more of the following questions (though you need not restrict yourself to them): (1) What do you find most rewarding about teaching English? (2) In what way(s) would you like your work to be different? (3) How has your approach to teaching English changed since you began doing it? (4) If you had an opportunity to say one thing to your English-teaching colleagues around the world, what would it be? (5) What advice would you give to a new teacher of English? Or any other point that you think might be of interest to readers of the FORUM.

The editors will give attention to all essays received, and those judged to be of the greatest interest to our readers will be published in the October issue, as space permits, together with a photograph and brief note about each author. To be considered for publication, submissions should reach the FORUM no later than 15 April. They should be addressed to:

Teachers Talk
ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM
Room 752, 1717 H Street N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20547

FORUM NEWS & IDEAS

BELGIUM

Course Design: Tailoring Lessons to Students

IAN BUTCHER

If you are not a teacher who likes to run through a course book like a railway timetable (generating about the same amount of interest from your students) and if you don't have to follow a pre-set, hidebound examination syllabus, then you will probably want your students to get the maximum amount of benefit in the minimum amount of time (particularly important in short, intensive courses). This can be done by finding out exactly what the students need and by designing your course around those needs.

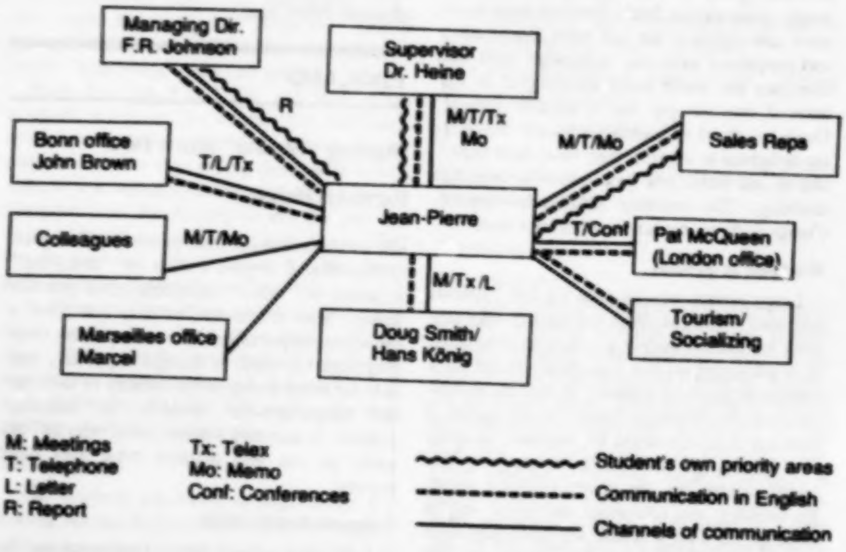
"Old hat! Who does he think he is? I do that anyway!" I can hear you mumbling indignantly. But do you? Do you do an in-depth analysis of needs at the beginning of the course, followed by a language profile of areas to be covered? Do you set up an immediate feedback system whereby students can alter and influence the direction of the course if they feel that it is not going their way? If you do, then you *are* a course designer: the student is in his rightful place, at the focal point.

Many students get beyond the point where they are studying English because they have to. They *choose* to study English: they give up their valuable time, pay a considerable amount of money, and are often seriously inconvenienced on a domestic level. They do this, in the great majority of cases, because they have a definite aim in mind: to be able to read scientific and technical papers with more ease, to be able to speak to their Texan boss on the telephone, to get a promotion or a raise in salary, to be able to study at an Anglophone university, or simply to explore and enjoy the culture. Therefore—and this is the important point—*every course* is to a greater or lesser extent an English for Specific Purposes course. Each course is unique and requires a different orientation.

The designer's task is naturally facilitated if he is designing a course for an individual or for a group of students with similar goals—for example, if the students need "business English" or "technical English." But even this is not good enough, as the target areas have to be defined in a much more precise way. For the typical "general English" class the language profile of needs is ragged and much more diffuse, but an accurate definition of objectives is still crucial. One soon becomes aware of discontent in the post-school situation, as the student votes with his feet and stops coming to the class.

Discovering the channels of communication

How do you find out what a student needs and what his particular "specific purposes" are, especially if there are fifteen or twenty or more in a class? The best way is to draw a box in the middle of the page and put the student's name in it. Then find out who he communicates with (in any language) in the course of a day. It is important to establish the relationship, as this decides whether the register in that skill is to be formal or informal.



Then you must discover *how* he communicates. Is it by telephone, telex, letter, formal or informal meeting, and so on? This determines which skills are to be given priority. Is the student passive at meetings, does he have to listen and report back, or must he make presentations or interrupt when he has a point to make? Does he have a variety of accents to contend with? Must he write his own report in English, or does he have the services of a bilingual secretary or a translation pool?

When his channels of communication have been established, use a color code to show when he communicates in English. This will considerably restrict the target structures and functions, and thus allow more time for these essential skills to be practiced. Another color might be used to indicate where the student places *his* priorities or where he feels he is having serious difficulties. In cases of personnel being prepared for a new posting or a future situation, anticipated channels of communication would have to be established.

This kind of exercise is obviously better done by the teacher, but it can be done by the students themselves if they are carefully briefed. With the students working in pairs, it could be used on the first day of a course as a kind of "icebreaker" (everyone likes talking about himself, everyone likes to find out about someone else). The profiles can be studied afterwards (maybe asking for the odd clarification during the coffee break), and you can prepare your materials accordingly.

Ian Butcher is a teacher of English at the European Economic Commission and related EEC institutions. He has taught in Switzerland and at the Universities of Nice and Besançon, and has also served as course coordinator in highly specialized business and technical courses at Specialist Language Courses (York) and for Pilgrims Language Courses. Mr. Butcher has published several articles, has edited a book, and is now preparing a longer work on industrial language training culled from his extensive in-company experience.

Allowing for student input

I also find that giving the students a program of what they will be doing for, say, that week is a great help. It shows the student's that you are carefully planning the course on a long-term basis, but it also gives them time to object and negotiate (with you and their peers) for more or less of a particular item, and so on. Build in some flexibility to accommodate follow-ups and overlaps to particularly interesting activities. The course is then *theirs*, the democratic process is in operation, the syllabus has not been imposed from above.

If you are teaching a group with a particular objective in, say, computers, take the trouble to inform yourself of their world. (You are probably going to ask them to work in language, your special field.) Find out what *hardware* and *software* are and what *floppy discs* and *peripheral units* are. Language drills and exercises are much more meaningful to students if they are put into a familiar context. Don't be afraid of looking ignorant. Students are delighted to explain: they have their expertise in one field, you have yours in language teaching. The exciting information-gap/exchange is there; exploit it: work as a team.

Working in groups

Large groups can be split up for "special activities" sessions. Here the teacher allocates work (or lets the student get on with something he is interested in) that is particularly apt for a student or group of students. It may be an article from the *Financial Times* for one group, a listening comprehension for another, an exercise from a grammar book for another. Use empty classrooms, the empty common room, the corridor: you encourage and hover and let them get on with it. These activities may have to be prepared a long time in advance (ask the students what they would like to do in the prescribed spot and prepare any necessary material), but they are worth their weight in gold.

Team teaching with a colleague is also possible where "special interest groups" can be taken off or where two "hoverers" are better than one. Don't be too intrusive or directive: let the students get on with it. Hand out "hot cards"[1] during role plays and simulations, so that the flow is not interrupted. Don't let them get too dependent on the teacher: encourage them to get around their own problems or make the others come to their aid. Too many teachers feel guilty or unwanted if they are not constantly directing, talking, and providing input.

Creative specificity

Determine areas of weakness in the use of structures and functions which require "surgery." Don't plod willy-nilly through structures and functions just because they are in the book or—in the famous mountaineers' phrase—"because they are there." Be selective. Use the role plays and simulations as raw material for your next lesson, as an indication of what is being used incorrectly. Then these isolated, specific problems can be tackled more effectively.

All this puts a heavy onus on the teacher. He/she is required to be very resourceful and adaptable. (Finding and making a comprehension exercise from a text on blowouts on North Sea oil rigs is not easy!) But the teacher's role must be that of guide through the student's own linguistic labyrinth, not as the bully (intentional or not) who obliges the student to follow the teacher's own labyrinth.

Instead of spreading linguistic buckshot with tightly closed eyes and clenched teeth in the hope that someone somewhere is bound to learn something, the teacher (or *course designer*) becomes a crack shot, hitting the target of needs every time.

ENGLAND

Making "Realia" More Real

RICHARD HAILL

All teachers at some time or other will choose, or be obliged, to give a class on "shopping": it seems a "safe," enjoyable, and practical lesson. Most textbooks, be they structural or functional-notional, include a chapter on shopping, and the topic is thought especially suitable for those living in the country of their target language—for students in language schools, in summer courses, etc., who can actually go out and practice what they have learned.

Using students' realia

I hit upon a fresh way of approaching the topic while teaching, not in an English-speaking environment, but in a college in Egypt. It occurred to me that instead of acting out the situations either with no "props" or with ones that I had brought in especially for the occasion, it might involve the students more, and thus give greater meaning to the exercise, if we made use of the students' *own* realia.

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Once we had studied the dialogues in the book and noted the relevant vocabulary, I asked some of the students (all girls) to give me their handbags: these were displayed on the teacher's (my) desk at the front, and I then followed the usual pattern by asking one girl to come out and act as the "customer," while I initially played the part of the shop assistant. Thus I could control the master dialogue and make sure all the possibly relevant points—the bag's color, size, material, price, and trappings (strap, pockets, etc.)—were covered.

The idea of the students appraising and discussing their own belongings can afford them great amusement, as well as engaging their interest more securely than might a dialogue that was simply a variation of the one in the book. Here is an example of the exchanges my classes produced:

> What about this one? It's very nice.
> No, it's dirty.
> Yes, I'm sorry, but the price is reduced.
> I don't like the color, anyway.
> Oh, but it's very fashionable now. And it's not plastic, you know . . .

I found the other students very attentive, particularly when their own items come up for assessment and possible purchase. Once the "customer's" choice is made, other students come up and take their turns, while the teacher sits at the back and notes any gross errors in grammar, lexis, or register.

Useful variations

Of course, not only bags, but students' watches, jewelry, make-up, pens, and coats can be used, and I have even invited a class to remove a shoe each and then displayed them on the front desk. (This made for a hilarious and pungent class!) Generally speaking, the bigger items are perhaps more suitable, since their merits and demerits are more easily visible to the class as a whole. If students are loath to part with their belongings, one can always have recourse to the objects in the classroom.

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[1] "Hot cards": slips of paper given to individual students showing the correction of a recently made mistake. Thus:

"He are here"
He is here

If yours has a few prints or pictures hanging up in it, why not take them down and let the students auction them off?

Alternatively, when the pace slackens after two or three "customers" have had a turn, the class can do the exercise for themselves in pairs, each pair first collecting articles from the rest of the class for their "shop." The customers can go from shop to shop, and the teacher can swap shopkeepers and customers during the proceedings, so that each student has practice in playing both roles. In fact, one of my classes suggested this variation for themselves and set up "shops" selling watches, rings, keys, books, and even classroom chairs.

An amusing approximation

Such "instant realia" simulations provide a welcome change from the more familiar set-book dialogues and the trying-on of imaginary coats, hats, etc. No classroom simulation, as the phrase implies, can be truly realistic, of course; each is only an approximation to reality. After all, even in real life one can, if one wishes, buy oneself a kilo of apples or a new hat by dint of gestures alone—or with a minimum of language. In the classroom, where oral practice is deemed of primary value, this use of realia with which the students identify closely can add, for teacher and students alike, a good deal of interest and amusement to the lesson on shopping.

Route Planning: A Structured Consensus-seeking Activity

Jon Roberts
University of Reading

This article describes an activity in which the students are asked to seek consensus (on a route for an imaginary tour). Cue cards indicate to each student the places he is to visit. The cue cards are designed to give students both common and conflicting wishes. In pairs and then fours they plan and compromise to reach a route acceptable to everyone. The agreed route is then drawn on a map, and is shared with the rest of the class. Some possible further exploitations are suggested in the latter part of the article.

The activity is a very useful "stepping stone" to more open-ended consensus-seeking tasks. It depends on choices made not from options produced by the students themselves, but from the limited set of options that the material supplies. The two features of seeking consensus and of choice from imposed and restricted options stimulate interaction and contribute needed structure. Such pair-group tasks demand that students:

1. use the target language independently of teacher direction
2. pay close attention to each other's utterances
3. offer a degree of mutual interest and support to carry out the task efficiently.

The material

Provide a map of Britain, marked with the towns appearing on the cue cards (have plenty of spares), and a cue card for each student.

- propose a change (*Perhaps we should change it, We want another stop*.)
- agree to accept (*That's right; All right, then*.)
- accept an alternative (*That would be better*.)

You are making a six-day, seven-night trip around Britain, paid for by the International Society of Students' Visits and Tours. Time is short, and so you can only visit two towns a day—one to visit and one to stay in. You have to agree with your partner on a route with seven stops. These are the towns you want tu see:

A	B	C	D
Colchester	Lincoln	Brighton	Southampton
Norwich	Oxford	Penzance	Liverpool
Manchester	Leeds	Oxford	Bristol
Edinburgh	Edinburgh	Leeds	Manchester
Newcastle	Liverpool	Edinburgh	Edinburgh
Birmingham	Bristol	Birmingham	Newcastle
Cambridge	Southampton	Bristol	Bath
Dover	Brighton	Norwich	Cambridge

Exploitation

1. *Orientation*

2. *Role Assignment:* Distribute maps and cue cards to pairs (A-B; C-D). You may prefer to present orally the information on the cue cards. Allow time for students to work out a provisional route. Ask students to recapitulate. Solicit questions.

3. *Discussion:* Pairs begin to discuss their route. Set a time limit, and call out the amount of time left, at regular intervals. Circulate and listen. Look out for early finishers, and intervene with extra topics for discussion, e.g., their route has too many stops or "double backs." Check that all pairs have a route and seven "stopovers," and call time.

Form fours (A-B + C-D). Ask them to try to agree on a route. Set a time limit, and minimize interventions. (If you do intervene, ask questions, rather than telling them what to do.) After a few minutes announce that you have a telegram from the Society to say the tour has to be reduced from seven nights to six. Call out the time left. Check to see that all groups have completed a route, and call time.

4. *Plenary:* Depending on classroom conditions, groups may share their plans with the class. This could be done orally by a spokesman or, for instance, through a display.

5. *Extension:* See the last section for suggestions on further exploitation.

The language

The students are likely to express the following notions in the course of the activity:

- propose a route (*We can go to/visit/do X; If we go to X, we can go to Y; Let's stop at X and then go on to Y*.)
- propose a route more tentatively (*Perhaps we could visit X; We could visit X, couldn't we?; If we stopped in X, we could visit Y*.)
- solicit a reaction (about route) (*We could do X, couldn't we?* (with rising inflection); *All in one day?; That's O.K., isn't it?*
- express opinion about route (*That's a (long/difficult) journey; I think that's enough for one day; We can't visit X and Y in one day*.)
- react (*Do you think so?; It's not too far?; Yes, perhaps you're right*.)
- refer to time and sequence (*in one day; the next day; We can visit X first, then Y; the first day; the second day*.)
- concession and correction (*Mind you, X to Y is a long trip; Wait a minute!*)
- express wishes (*I want to visit; [Where] Do you want to visit?*)
- refer to cue cards

I've got…
Have you got… } *on my (your) list/card?*
What have you got…

Extension

Developments

1. As an integrated reading and discussion activity, students research and make genuine choices. Present either authentic texts or one prepared text describing, for example, ten major European cities. For homework they read and choose five cities they would like to visit in a free "five-city tour." In the next class, group students who have some preferences in common and ask them to plan a new tour. For more advanced classes, give them a "short list" of ten cities, and tell them where to find a short description of each in the library on which to base a choice of five.

2. As listening practice, read out routes and have students draw them on the map. This enables receptive review of time adverbials, sequencers, names of towns, and prepositions.

3. As writing practice (lower intermediate)

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give the students a completed map and a description of the tour (either as future intention or past fact). They then write up their own tour.

Variations

Topic and materials will need to match your group's interests and knowledge of the world. (The example given here was used with an advanced Japanese group about to make a very similar tour of Britain.) Keeping to travel as a topic, you may use: resorts or cities in an English-speaking country; resorts or cities in the students' own country; cities in Europe, Asia, or worldwide; places of interest in London, New York, Madrid, etc.; places of interest in the students' home town or capital city.

In place of resorts and cities, one could offer material on hotels, restaurants, or national parks. By changing the touring holiday to a shopping trip, you may present a map of the city with shops to be visited and bus or metro routes available. Students will have a set of shops or a shopping list on their cue cards.

Whether students are taking the role of tourist, traveler, or shopper (or perhaps traveling salesman, delivery man, or treasure hunter), the cue cards need to be designed so that:

1. there can be initial points of agreement
2. a few individual "wishes" have to be abandoned
3. most of the partners' wishes can in fact be satisfied in the final plan.

INDONESIA

A Group Discussion Technique

AHMAD D. HABIR

Institute for Management Education and Development, Jakarta

"You are the sole survivor of a plane crash in the hills of interior Irian Jaya.[1] You are determined to reach the nearest village. However, you have only a vague idea about the direction and distance of this village. It may be several days away or it may be farther. Fortunately, after going through the wreckage of the plane, you have found a number of things that could be of use to you in your journey. These items are:

a blanket
one canteen of water
a walkie-talkie
a small first-aid kit
a compass
a can of dried milk
a small mirror
a box of matches
a loaf of bread
a handgun with bullets
Rp 2500 in Rp 100 notes[2]
rope (2m)

List these items *in their order of importance* for the trip."

The text above is my adaptation of a group dynamics exercise used in business schools in the United States, the original version of which features a damaged spacecraft on the moon. I have found this exercise very helpful in encouraging participation in group discussion in our intermediate classes. By making appropriate changes to fit their own situations, other teachers may find it useful as well.

Procedure

Before handing out a copy of the text to each student, I read it aloud, stopping to ask questions on the text or to explain the meaning of some of the words. The students are also given a chance to ask their own questions. The copies are then distributed. To double-check their understanding of the exercise, I read the text aloud again, with the students following from their copies.

I then tell them to make their individual list of the items in order of importance by numbering the items ("1" for the most important item, "2" for the next most important, etc.). In this part of the exercise, the students work on their own without consulting their classmates. I set a time limit to prevent too much indecision on the part of the students.

After they have finished their individual lists, the students are formed into groups. The number of people in a group can vary, although experience suggests that four in a group works best. I also find that random grouping works well enough. Other teachers may prefer to make sure that there is at least one good student in each group. Each group is given another copy of the text and told to make a new list of the items in order of importance, only this time based on *group consensus*. This is the key to the exercise that encourages participation. Having made his individual choices, each person has to explain, if not defend, his choices in order for the group to reach a consensus.

Ahmad D. Habir writes: "I am an instructor in teaching English as a second language at the Institute for Management Education and Development [Lembaga Pendidikan dan Pembinaan Manajemen], Jakarta. I started teaching at the Institute two years ago while still working in a merchant bank, was hooked, and have been at it ever since."

After each group has finished (again a time limit is set), the group members select a spokesman to write their list on the board and to explain to the rest of the class their reasons for choosing the items in their particular order. A discussion between groups, commenting on their various choices, usually follows. If time is a factor, only the five or six most important items should be listed. The whole exercise should take no more than thirty minutes.

There is no one "right" list, although I usually point out that water and food are necessary for survival, and therefore these items at least should be well up on the list. In general, however, the students need no encouragement to come up with uses for the items listed.

During the discussion I keep my involvement at a minimum, giving assistance when asked and noting mistakes for later correction.

ISRAEL

Teaching Difficult Texts at the University Level

STELLA STATMAN

Bar Ilan University

Almost every new teacher of English for Special Purposes enters his first classroom ready to teach the structure and lexicon of English and the principles of reading comprehension in a way appropriate to the style and requirements of his students' particular discipline. He soon finds that after he has dealt with all the discrete items in the text and has shown the logical connection between the parts, his students simply do not know what the text is all about. The problem is not only one of language; it is equally one of content. For some reason, when students hear lectures in their native language dealing with concepts in their fields of specialization, they accept notions that they only vaguely understand, but in the English course doubts and questions surface and are verbalized.

Few students are willing to admit to poor understanding of ideas with which they should be familiar, so the cry is always about the difficulty of the English. It is as though the student believed he had only to break through some language barrier in order to achieve complete comprehension. The truth of the matter is that many students would not understand the text even if it were written in their mother tongue. Some years ago I tested my belief that students have great difficulty in understanding ideas, in the following simple manner: I divided a class of advanced university students of English into two groups and gave each group the same (previously unseen) text and the same questions. One group received the material in their mother tongue; the second group, in the target language, with permission to use any dictionary. The results were not substantially different. Since then, I have repeated the experiment on a number of occasions, always with similar results. At a certain point, I find, the problem inevitably becomes less one of language and more a struggle with the ideas.

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[1] Irian Jaya is the Indonesian part of the island of New Guinea.

[2] Rp is the abbreviation for Rupiah, the Indonesian monetary unit.

Teaching English and ideas

The obvious comment here, of course, is that the teachers in the students' field of study have not done their job properly. But whether the fault lies with them or with the student who professed to understanding when meaning was blurred does not concern us. We have to find a way of dealing with the student's problems as they arise in our classrooms. If we find, as I believe we shall, that he does not understand the concepts in the passages we give him, we must find a way of combining a study of English with a study of the concepts under discussion.

The first time I set out to teach a text in the manner that I explain below, I felt pressured by the consequent loss of time from my own heavy syllabus. I was working with a group of sociology students and wanted to teach English (whatever that umbrella term means), and there I was, trying to explain the difference between positive and negative and formal and informal sanctions. By the end of the session I felt exhilarated. The students were interested and excited. They had learned the terms; they had clarified their ideas; they understood the English; they felt much more self-confident. Once they had grasped the basic concepts, the reading of the passage gradually became easier and easier for them.

For any but the simplest texts, my system is as follows: First I deal with any problems in vocabulary or structure, as far as possible dealing with the latter by showing that even the most difficult English sentence is just an extension of a simple pattern (examples follow). Second, I divide the class into buzz groups (pairs or groups of four or five) and give them guiding questions on the concepts in the passage and on the passage as a whole. They are asked to discuss the questions together. The group (or pair) is responsible for the answers. During this part of the session, I move from group to group, dealing with any difficulties that may arise. Lastly, the text is read again and group answers are presented and discussed.

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An illustration

To illustrate the method, I have taken a short paragraph from one of the texts read by students of the social sciences:

"The simpler, more stable and stationary the society or community, the greater the likelihood of high degrees of status consistency for persons and groups in that society. On the other hand, in societies or historical periods in which a high degree of change is to be found—change linked with status mobility—it is obvious that status consistency will be lower in predictive degree. That is, it will be less certain that merely because a person will be high in one or two of the attributes mentioned, he will be high in the others." (From Robert Nisbet, "Sources of Status," in *The Social Bond*, New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1977.)

Part 1. Problems of language and structure.

1. Show that *stable* and *stationary* come from the same Latin stem *sta*, like *stand*, *statue*, etc.
2. Show the rhetorical function of expressions like *on the other hand, that is, merely*.
3. Show that the first sentence is simply an extension of the common and simple structure: *The* + (comparative form of adjective or adverb); *the* + (comparative form of adjective or adverb). The principle here, as will be obvious from the examples below, is to start with the simple and familiar and then move in stages to the more difficult sentence that appears in the text.

   The more you study, the more you know.

   The higher the grade, the happier the student.

   The simpler the society, the greater the degree of conservatism.

   The simpler, the more stable the society, and greater the degree of conservatism.

   The simpler, more stable and stationary the society or community, the greater the likelihood of high degrees of status consistency for persons and groups in that society.

Part 2. Concepts study.

1. In groups of four, discuss the following questions. Try to use English expressions from the text.
   - *a*. In your own country, which community would you consider to be stable and stationary?
   - *b*. Can you think of another word or expression for these two attributes?
   - *c*. What kind of a society would be the opposite of stable and stationary? What kind of changes would you expect to find there?
   - *d*. Can you remember how the writer defined *status consistency* in the previous paragraph?
   - *e*. What is the degree of status consistency in the community that you chose as your answer to question *a*?
   - *f*. What is meant by the term *status mobility?* Give two examples to clarify the term.
   - *g*. In which period of history do we find a high degree of status consistency?
   - *h*. In which period of history do we find a low degree of status consistency?
   - *i*. What is the meaning of the verb *to predict?* What do you think is meant by *predictive degree?*
   - *j*. In the previous paragraph the writer listed the attributes that normally give a person status. Can you remember some of them? If not, read the last paragraph again and refresh your memory. Now give two examples from any historical period of people whom we know to have been high in one or two of the attributes listed and whom we expect to have been high in the others.
   - *k*. Give two examples from your own society of people who are high in one or two of the attributes listed but are not high in the others.

When students appear to have finished their discussion, the answers are presented for class discussion. There are no grades and no penalties, so threat is kept to a minimum.

Part 3. The passage is read again and, if required, tested in any of the usual ways.

Clearly, it is not necessary to deal with all the paragraphs in such detail. The passage that was chosen here (mainly because of its brevity) is the fourth paragraph in the article. I find that I rarely need to work in this way beyond the fourth or fifth paragraph. By the time the student reaches this point and has grasped what the article is all about, he can usually make his own more confident way through the rest of the material. □

The English Corner

SHOSHANA POREH
Romema School, Haifa

The decision of the pupils in the sixth grade to publish an "English Corner" as a permanent department in their school newspaper has established an interesting, stimulating, and rewarding activity in our English program. The purpose of this brief article is to describe this activity and its organization.

Some necessary conditions

The first condition for such an activity is an established (monthly) school newspaper. Equally important are the ability and willingness of the teacher to perform the difficult, and often frustrating, job of an editor with an enthusiasm that can be passed on to the pupils. Spelling mistakes and errors in sentence structure must, of course, be corrected, but every possible effort should be made not to alter the content and style of what the writers—who must always be the pupils—have submitted.

Pros and cons

Whatever we teachers may think about the significance of a school newspaper is less important than what our pupils feel about it. We have discussed the subject in our classes, and here is a sample of the pupils' responses:

"It prepares you to be a correspondent for a real newspaper."

"You can show it to your relatives."

"When you write for the 'English Corner,' you learn new words and how to spell them."

"We can send it to pupils in America and in Egypt, and in other countries."

Of course, not all the expectations can be fulfilled.

Some pupils cannot write, while others feel that they should be the only contributors. There is limited space in the paper, and the teacher has to screen the pupils' many efforts carefully, remembering that a school paper cannot be perfect or very sophisticated. Nevertheless, our English Corner is most enthusiastically read by all the pupils (and their parents), puzzles are solved, and the results compared. The number and changing roster of contributors prove that the paper is welcomed and well thought of by most of the pupils.

The contents

We publish every good contribution, but we especially encourage poems, news reports, holiday and vacation experiences, short personal comments on everyday life, crossword puzzles using classwork vocabulary, comments about characters in our T.V. programs, and announcements of events.

We also encourage joint contributions complemented by art work. From time to time, if space permits, the lyrics of a popular song are added to the English Corner. This is always accepted enthusiastically in school.

Shoshana Poreh, who has lived in Israel nearly all her life, has been teaching English as a foreign language in the primary school of the Romema School, Haifa, since 1970. She is currently serving as in-service training consultant to the school. In 1975, she helped train teachers in the Vietnamese-English program in Fort Collins, Colorado, and in 1978 supervised a state-sponsored summer workshop for teachers of English in Israel.

ITALY

An Intensive Course for Improving Oral Skills

MAURIZIO GOTTI
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This article describes an experimental intensive course for improving oral skills of students in a state senior secondary school in Bergamo, Italy, conducted with the help of some teachers from the local university.

The course was organized to overcome the students' difficulties in understanding and speaking the foreign language they were studying. The main sources of difficulty were the following:

1. Classes are so big (usually around thirty students per class) that it is difficult to have all the students take an active part in oral practice.
2. The techniques and materials used provide limited practice for the development of oral skills.
3. Very few students have the opportunity to go abroad or to talk to native speakers in their own country.
4. It is often impossible for students to watch television programs in the language they are studying, and only in large cities are there cinemas that show films with the original sound tracks.

In order to overcome these problems, the teachers in a senior secondary school in Bergamo asked the local university to help them organize a course that would improve their students' oral skills.

The general plan

Since university courses usually start a month later than secondary-school courses, it was decided that the university teachers would give a one-month course for the secondary-school students, experimenting with techniques for teaching the spoken language.

The students were divided into groups of about fifteen each, according to their knowledge of the foreign language, which was assessed by means of a test based on an interview with native speakers and a listening-comprehension test taken in the language laboratory.[1]

As the course was concerned mainly with the spoken language, it was decided that only native speakers should teach, and that only authentic material (such as recordings of foreign programs, songs, news broadcasts, etc.) would be used, so as to provide the students with real models of the foreign language. Moreover, each group would have more than one teacher, so that the students could get used to understanding various accents and tones of voice.[2]

The class met four afternoons a week for two hours each, over a four-week period, for a total of thirty-two hours. During this period the teachers from the university and the state school met regularly to discuss the program, to check on its development, and to analyze the results.

The English course

Following is a description of the English course, of which I was the coordinator.

The eight hours per week were taught by four different teachers, each of whom, during his two hours, conducted different activities.

One teacher was concerned mainly with describing pictures and commenting on the events and characters represented in them.

After asking the students to describe the various pictures using the vocabulary they knew, he introduced new words suitable for the situation presented. The students were then asked to try to interpret the attitudes of the various characters, making appropriate comments and giving suitable explanations in the foreign language.

At this stage the teacher invited the students to think of the sentences that the various characters might have said and to link them together afterwards in dialogues. Besides correcting the students' sentences, the teacher introduced the idiomatic expressions that he thought more suitable to the particular situation.

A second teacher, who was concerned mainly with listening comprehension, worked in the language laboratory, where he asked the students to listen to songs in English and to fill in the gaps in the texts he gave them. He also played recordings of authentic material, such as radio programs, news broadcasts of various

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[1] The interview was a one-to-one conversation about general subjects (hobbies, pastimes, daily routines, etc.), while the test in the language laboratory was based on listening to a dialogue spoken by native speakers at normal speed, the comprehension of which was checked through a multiple-choice questionnaire.

[2] The teachers of the English course were of English, Welsh, Canadian, and American origin.

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kinds, and conversations between native speakers, and checked the students' comprehension by asking them questions after the listening period.

Another teacher based his work on the songs the students had listened to in the laboratory, discussing their meaning, and, wherever possible, linking the events described in them with the students' own experiences or with problems they had encountered or heard of.

The fourth teacher tried to help the students improve their oral production by presenting them with situations that they were to solve through the use of the foreign language.[3]

A successful experiment

The results of these courses were very satisfactory, and the secondary-school teachers noticed a great improvement in the students' mastery of the language, not only in oral skills, but in written work as well. Moreover, they noticed that the students were more highly motivated to study the foreign language, and that their attitude had improved: they were less inhibited, less afraid of making mistakes, and more prompt in overcoming the difficulties presented by new communication situations.

The students themselves, in the final questionnaires, expressed their satisfaction with these courses, as well as the hope that the techniques and materials used by the university teachers might also be used by the state teachers during the school year.

These courses were also useful in initiating a closer cooperation between the teachers in both schools, cooperation that was not limited to this specific problem, but which also involved other matters related to language teaching.

This experience has shown that there should be no gap between linguistic research and language teaching, between university and secondary school. Methodological problems can't be reserved for only one type of teacher, but must be discussed and solved with the help of all teachers at all levels.

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[3] Examples of such situations were the loss of a document, the booking of seats, apologizing, etc.

Letters

A Question on Noun-forming Suffixes

S. Fonseca
Rio de Janeiro 22.010
Brazil
22 May 1981

Dear Editor:

The other day a student of mine asked me when to use the suffixes *-ness*, *-ship*, and *-hood*. He gave me the words *brightness*, *friendship*, and *brotherhood* as examples. He wanted to know the rule. I couldn't answer him, although I know we use *goodness*, for example, and not *goodhood*, *citizenship* and not *citizenhood*, etc. There is, I am sure, an answer to be found in the origin and growth of the English language.

Could you help me with a satisfactory answer for my student? I have reread both Jespersen's *Growth and Structure of the English Language* and Bradley's *The Making of the English Language*—books I studied at the university—but I still couldn't find it.

Cordially,
S. FONSECA

The Editor Replies

We are mindful of the problem expressed in your student's question. Unfortunately, there is no simple rule that can provide much help. A couple of general observations may be useful, however.

To begin with, we can separate the suffix *-ness* from *hood* and *ship*, mainly on the grounds that *-ness* is added to adjectives, while the other two suffixes are (with a few exceptions) added to nouns. We might, therefore, consider two groups of noun-forming suffixes: (l) those added to adjectives: *-ness* and *-ity*, and (2) those added to nouns: *-hood*, *-ship*, and *-dom*.

-ness and *-ity*

The suffix ***-ness*** may be affixed to practically any adjective (or participle) to form an abstract noun denoting quality or state, e.g., *manliness*, *dedicatedness*, *obligingness*. It may also denote a single instance or example of such a state, quality, or condition: a *kindness*, many *kindnesses*, an *illness*, etc. This latter use (as a countable noun) is quite limited as compared to the almost unlimited formation of uncountable (abstract) nouns with *-ness*. Some examples: *quietness*, *greatness*, *sadness*, *togetherness*, *friendliness*, *goodness*, *strangeness*, *cleverness*, *happiness*, *darkness*, *usefulness*, *selfishness*, *kindheartedness*.

The suffix ***-ity*** is added to many adjectives of classical or French origin, and regularly to those with the suffixes *-able*/*-ible* (with consequent change to *-abil-*/*-ibil-*), *-al*, and *-ic*, to form (as does the suffix *-ness*) abstract nouns denoting state, quality, condition: *sanity*, *diversity*, *rapidity*, *respectability*, *banality*, *security*, *elasticity*, *similarity*, *chastity*, *serenity*, *verbosity*, etc. (Note, however, *reasonableness*, not *reasonability*; *charitableness*, not *charitability*; etc.)

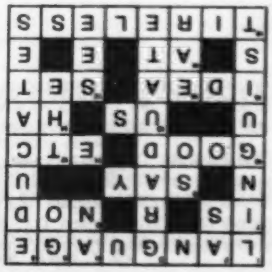
Another general observation that we can make about *-ness* and *-ity* is that *-ity* is used mostly with adjectives that form their comparative and superlative degrees by adding *more*, *most*, whereas *-ness* is most typically added to adjectives that form their comparative and superlative degrees with *-er*, *-est*. That this is a general rather than an absolute rule can be seen in the exceptions you can find in the examples given above (e.g., *manliness*, *dedicatedness*, *obligingness*, *illness*, *togetherness*, *usefulness*, *selfishness*, *kindheartedness*, *reasonableness*, *charitableness*, *sanity*).

We should note, too, that even where nouns are formed with *-ity*, *-th*, or some other derivational suffix, a noun with *-ness* may also be formed on the same base, though in such cases it often has a specialized meaning. Thus, *clearness*, *rareness*, *humanness*, *deadness*, *trueness*, *deepness*, etc., exist, as well as *clarity*, *rarity*, *humanity*, *death*, *truth*, *depth*. In general, the student of English as a foreign language should learn and use the more common form (in *-ity*, *-th*, etc.) first.

-ship, *-hood*, and *-dom*

It is difficult to differentiate *-ship* and *-hood* usefully by any simple definition. However, the following definitions, observations, and examples may help.

solution to crossword puzzle



The suffixes **-ship** and **-hood** may be added to nouns (and sometimes adjectives) to form abstract nouns denoting quality, condition, or state. Many of the nouns formed with *-ship* can also be used as countable instances, e.g., *friendship, scholarship, dictatorship*. Many nouns ending in *-ship* denote status, rank, office, or profession: *kingship, governorship, clerkship, professorship, lectureship, authorship, membership*. They may denote a whole group: a large *membership, readership*, etc. Another, distinct, meaning of *ship* is "the art or ability or skill or functioning of" something: *penmanship, leadership, horsemanship, seamanship, statesmanship, musicianship, one-upmanship*, etc.

In a few instances *-ship* is added to an adjective, e.g., *hardship*. As stated above, the suffix **-hood**, like *-ship*, forms nouns denoting state, condition, quality, or character: *manhood, womanhood, boyhood, childhood, girlhood, motherhood, adulthood, knighthood, widowhood, sainthood, brotherhood*, etc.; also, an instance of a specified state or quality: *falsehood;* also, a group of persons of a particular character, class, profession, etc.: *neighborhood, brotherhood, priesthood*.

In a few cases *-hood* is added to adjectives: *hardihood, livelihood, likelihood*.

The suffix **-dom** is much more limited than *-ship* and *-hood*. It denotes domain, realm, condition, etc., and forms abstract nouns from other nouns (*kingdom, earldom, martyrdom, dukedom, thralldom, Christendom*) and from adjectives (*freedom, wisdom*). Among the few serious modern words formed with *-dom* are *boredom, stardom, filmdom, officialdom, gangsterdom*.

You are correct in thinking that an answer (insofar as there is one at all) is to be found, at least partly, in the origin and growth of the English language. However, we have tried to keep our reply as simple and practical as possible, and so have confined our remarks to effects rather than causes. It is, for instance, a fact that in Old English and Middle English the suffix *-dom* was very productive and was frequently used with adjectives (e.g., *falsedom, richdom*) to form words that later fell into disuse. The suffixes *-hood* and *-ship* have had somewhat the same history, so that formerly existing words (e.g., *boldship, busiship, cleanship, kindship*, etc.) are no longer part of English, having been replaced, in most cases, by nouns in *-ness*, which remains the most productive of these suffixes.

Some useful sources for the information given above and for further study are: Albert C. Baugh, *A History of the English Language*, 2nd ed. (New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, 1957); W. Nelson Francis, *The Structure of American English* (New York: The Ronald Press, 1958); Randolph Quirk et al., *A Grammar of Contemporary English* (London: Longman, 1972).

Book Exchange?

25 March 1981

Dear Editors:

In the English Teaching Forum (April 1981), I found a letter entitled "Ever a Problem," by Betty Pimentel, and I really don't know why you did not answer the last part of it, because what she suggested is very interesting: that you include lists of teachers from all parts of the world, with their addresses, who would be interested in corresponding with other teachers.

One year ago I began to collect English-teaching books as a hobby, not only Spanish-English books but any foreign-language–English books. And that's why I'm interested, too, that Forum should include English teacher lists from all parts of the world. I ask all teachers that read this letter to mail me one or several English-teaching books, in order to improve my collection.

Thanks a lot.

Sincerely yours,
Lic. Arturo Cepeda M.
Calle Cagliari #5113
Fracc. Sta. Cecilia
Monterrey, N.L., México

[Editor's Note: We were, of course, interested in Betty Pimentel's suggestion that we publish lists of the names and addresses of teachers "from all parts of the world" who would like to correspond with other teachers. We refrained from offering to do this simply because, judging by the mail we receive, there would be many more applicants for such lists than we could hope to accommodate. Having received this second plea, we will yield to your request and set aside some space for this purpose in a forthcoming issue, on an experimental basis. Readers who wish to be included in such a list should send us their name and address, and, as space permits, we will publish these on a "first come, first served" basis.]

An Appeal for Back Issues

October 1980

Dear Editor:

I hope that you will be able to publish this letter in the English Teaching Forum. Ever since I came into contact with the Forum in the year 1975, I have sought the opportunity to be a subscriber, but without success, as the subscription list in my country has been full.

I am now appealing to old-time users of the Forum who may have some to spare; no matter how old they might be, they would still mean a great deal to me. By going through the Forum, I not only gather ideas from more experienced colleagues, but I also feel at home, knowing that our world is large, and that there are many of us in the same boat, paddling to the same destiny, and sharing in our course the same or similar difficulties.

Just the idea that I am with my professional colleagues gives me inspiration to work harder, especially when I read their biographies, their experiences, and the ideas that they share with us all.

Any spare Forums could be sent to the following address:

Peter F. Chesami
Government Teachers' Training College
P.O. Box 175 Foumban, Western Province
United Republic of Cameroon

With many thanks to the editor.

Peter F. Chesami

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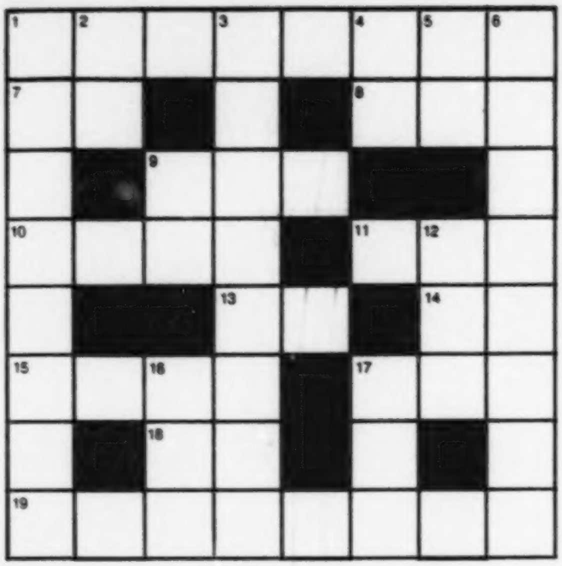

ACROSS

1 Vehicle of communication; tongue; the speech (and writing) of a particular country, nation, or group
7 Form of *to be*.
8 Movement of the head to signify agreement, understanding, or assent
9 Express in words; speak; state; utter
10 Better than average; suitable; proper; not bad
11 And so forth; and others of the same kind (abbr.)
13 You and me
14 Half of a laugh
15 A thought; mental picture
17 Put in a place or position; a group of related items; fixed, established, firm
18 Preposition
19 Patient; untiring; indefatigable

DOWN

1 Language specialist
2 Equally; in the same amount or degree; in the same manner; while
3 Complete a school course; obtain a degree
4 Article
5 Move; proceed
6 Teaches; develops the mind or character by training
9 Thus
12 Article
16 Organ of hearing
17 Observe; use the eyes; have the power of sight; understand

Solution appears elsewhere in this issue.

Time for a Smile

One night a man came upon a boy looking for something under a streetlight. The man asked the boy what he had lost. The boy said that he had lost his watch. Since it was obviously not there, the man asked the boy if he was sure that he had lost his watch in that spot. The boy said that he had lost the watch at another place, farther down the street. The man then asked the boy why he was looking for the watch under the streetlight. The boy replied, "Well, sir, the light is much better here."

A man was carrying a grandfather clock through the streets of the city. He was obviously doing it with a lot of difficulty. Finally, another man came up to him and asked, "Pardon me, it's none of my business, but don't you think a wristwatch would be simpler?"

As I was walking along a street in a small town a man came up to me and asked, "What time is it?" I looked at my watch and answered, "It's five o'clock." "I must be going crazy," said the man. "All day long I keep getting different answers."

The policeman rang the doorbell, not knowing quite how he was going to break the news. The door opened and a woman stood there gazing anxiously into the policeman's eyes. "I'm sorry to tell you this, but your husband's new watch is broken." "Broken?" she said. "How did it happen?" The policeman replied, "A piano fell on him."

What time is it when an elephant sits on a fence? Time to get a new fence.

A RIDDLE

My face is marked,
My hands keep moving;
I've no time to play–
I must run all day.
What am I?

A TIMELY VERSE

A clock is an ____
That's used to tell ____
(Though I'm a ____ embarrassed
To ____ such a rhyme).
–ED.

ANSWERS

Riddle: A clock.
A Timely Verse: item, time, mile, emit

FORUM

Volume XX
April 1982
Number 2

Anne Covell Newton
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Acknowledgments and copyright notices, when necessary, appear with the articles

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THE LIGHTER SIDE **inside back cover**

Psychology, Linguistics, and Language Teaching

WILGA M. RIVERS
Harvard University

WILGA M. RIVERS is professor of romance languages and coordinator of language instruction at Harvard University. She has also taught at the University of Illinois, Columbia University, Northern Illinois University, and Monash University (Australia), and has lectured in many countries to teachers of English and other languages. Dr. Rivers has contributed over sixty articles to professional journals and has written a number of books on language teaching, the most recent being *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English to Speakers of Other Languages* (with Mary S. Temperley: Oxford University Press, 1978), and the second edition of *Teaching Foreign Language Skills* (University of Chicago Press, 1981).

When we asked Wilga Rivers if she would contribute to our twentieth-year celebration an article on psychology and TESOL during the past two decades or so, we discovered that she had recently written a paper so close to our purposes that, with very minor modifications, it would appropriately meet our needs. The paper, originally published as part of the Seventy-ninth Yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, was entitled Psychology and Linguistics as Bases for Language Pedagogy. *Since we had already carried an article on linguistics in our January issue, we were, at this time, more interested in psychology than in linguistics. We at first hoped, therefore, that by judicious condensation, we could eliminate those parts that had to do with linguistics rather than psychology. It was at that point that we realized in full what we had strongly suspected—that the two disciplines were so closely intertwined in their relation to language teaching as to make a discussion of either without the other virtually impossible. This article is, therefore, a very slight abridgment of Dr. Rivers's original paper.*

Modern psychology and modern linguistics have burst into full vigor since the latter part of the nineteenth century. They have thus shared in that evolving spirit of the times which can be seen through history to influence scientists in various disciplines at approximately the same period, as new findings radically modify previously unquestioned theoretical models. In this article, we will trace the influence of the switches and changes in theoretical orientations in these two disciplines on the teaching of second languages, especially during the past two decades.

LANGUAGE USE AS PATTERNED ORAL BEHAVIOR

In the 1920s and 1930s, most behavioral psychologists were committed to a nonintrospective study of human behavior that concentrated on what could be objectively observed, described, and measured, without resort to the presumption of inner motives or innate mechanisms as determinants. Since much of overt human behavior takes the form of actions repeated in similar circumstances (that is, in response to similar stimuli), learning theorists of this period focused on habits and tried to determine how they are acquired. They observed and measured events which co-occur when habits are formed (stimuli and responses) and they manipulated the consequences of responses to study the effect these had on repeated occurrence. They tried to find out why habits sometimes

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Reprinted with permission of the National Society for the Study of Education from *Learning a Second Language*, ed. Frank R. Grittner, Seventy-ninth Yearbook of The National Society for the Study of Education, Part II (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1980), pp. 44–66. Some of the ideas from this essay appear in Chapter 3 of the second edition of *Teaching Foreign Language Skills*.

disappeared. Extending Thorndike's work on reward and punishment (his law of effect, elaborated at the turn of the century), reinforcement theorists maintained that an action was most likely to recur when pleasurable consequences followed immediately upon its appearance, and that the continuation of this sequence of stimulus-response-reward increased the probability of specific actions recurring in response to particular stimuli, thus establishing a habit pattern.

Language behavior was regarded by reinforcement theorists as being the same in kind as other forms of behavior and, therefore, subject to the same laws of learning. In this paradigm, language acquisition was described as follows. As an infant is babbling, it utters a sound that resembles the appropriate word for some person or object nearby. This utterance is rewarded or reinforced, with approving noises and smiles from the person attending to the child, and, as a consequence, the probability of the emission of the same groups of sounds in a similar situation is increased. With repeated reinforcement, a habit is established and the child continues to name the person or object in the same way. Inappropriate responses disappear through lack of reinforcement. As more combinations of sounds are reinforced and as the use of these is generalized to similar stimuli, the child learns to combine verbal responses in more and more complex ways. Oral responses are gradually refined through differential reinforcement in actual communication situations.

The methods the structural linguists as language teachers developed for language learning similarly emphasized overt patterned behavior of responses to stimuli. This combination of habit-formation techniques became known as the audiolingual approach.[1]

Modifying the audiolingual approach

In the early 1960s, criticisms were leveled against the audiolingual approach.[2] These focused on the overemphasis on tedious mechanistic processes to which the student is not expected to make any spontaneous, personal contribution. Critics questioned whether real learning can take place when students are giving automatic responses in drill, without understanding the crucial element they are practicing or its relationship to other features of the language system. It was found that students who could use with facility language material in the exact form in which it had been practiced in dialogues or drills were at a loss to adapt this material for the expression of a multitude of personal meanings in communication with others. The value of learning by trial and error began to be reemphasized. Structured situations in which students would rarely make errors were found to provide insufficient preparation for spontaneous expression which requires flexibility, alertness, and audacity in extending what one has learned to new contexts. Teachers began to realize that if students were to communicate, they needed practice in communicating personal messages, not just formulas presented by the teacher or the textbook writer. Finally, individual differences in students received fresh consideration. It began to be recognized, once again, that some students learn efficiently through oral materials, whereas others need the support of a visual representation; some students feel traumatized when they are expected to produce rapid foreign-language responses, while others feel stimulated.

As a result of these criticisms, modifications were made to prevalent audiolingual practices. More explanation was provided before or during practice. More attention was paid to the creation in the classroom of situations as close to real-life language interaction as possible, and new materials attempted to present the culture in which the language is embedded in a more authentic way. Above all, teachers felt the need to relax the tension of early language learning. They sought to introduce more variety of activity, more friendliness and humor, within an atmosphere in which the students felt at ease with the teacher and with each other, in what could otherwise be an ego-threatening situation.

THE MENTALISTIC TREND

The tide in linguistics and in psychology soon turned definitively. Linguistic theorists declared themselves to be frankly "mentalistic," and cognitive psychology became active in studying processes of the mind. Perception, memory, thinking, how meaning is encoded and expressed, and information processing became areas of major concern. Languages were no longer regarded by the linguists as distinct sets of arbitrary vocal symbols, nor as systems of habits acquired through conditioning by the psychologists. Transformational-generative linguistic theory pointed out that apparent similarity of surface forms of a language may camouflage important differences in meaning, and that drilling of such surface features, indiscriminately selected, can lead to error when the student begins to extend by analogy the use of structures that have been practiced in a mechanical, unthinking fashion.

Chomsky hypothesized that language was not acquired by children through a form of conditioning dependent on reinforcement or reward. He maintained that human beings come into the world with innate language-learning abilities in the form of a language acquisition device that proceeds by hypothesis testing. Children make hypotheses about the form of the grammar of the language they are learning and compare this with their innate knowledge of possible grammars based on the principles of universal grammar. In this way, the individual's competence, or internalized knowledge of the grammar of the language, is built up, and this competence makes language use, or performance, possible. Language use is thus rule-governed behavior that enables speakers to create new utterances which conform to the rules they have internalized.[3]

---

[1] For a more detailed account of audiolingual techniques, see Wilga M. Rivers, *Teaching Foreign-Language Skills*, 2d ed. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1981), chap. 2.

[2] For an early evaluation and critique, see Wilga M. Rivers, *The Psychologist and the Foreign-Language Teacher* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1964).

The terms "rule-governed behavior," "creative language use," and "hypothesis testing" soon replaced "building in habits" and "saturation practice" as the catchwords of language teaching.

Rule-governed behavior

The words "rule-governed" applied to language use appealed to those teachers who had worried about the fact that rules of grammar were not systematically presented, explained, and learned in the inductive procedures of the audiolingual approach. They proposed a return to explaining grammar rules first, thus involving students' reasoning processes in language learning, in contrast to what some called the "mindless" drilling in audiolingual classes. This emphasis on explanations of grammatical functioning was a major feature of what came to be known as cognitive-code learning.

Chastain claimed as the "one basic tenet of the cognitive approach" that "students [should] never be expected to meet new structures prior to the explanation of those forms." "The term 'cognition'," he continued, "implies proceeding from mental understanding and awareness to practice; from studying a structure to seeing it used in context."[4] Chastain's deductive order of learning was the following: step 1, comprehension of new grammatical concepts which are presented deductively; step 2, practice in selection of linguistic forms to fit the context in exercises; step 3, the study of reading and listening materials, with some opportunity provided for students to produce messages intended to communicate their thoughts to another person.[5] This approach put language analysis before language use and instruction by the teacher before the student practices forms. That a deductive instructional approach of this type is more "cognitive" than the inductive, discovery approach to grammar of audiolingual methodology cannot be sustained on the basis of any psychological evidence, since induction requires just as much cognitive processing as deduction. Furthermore, the "rules" to which Chomsky had been referring were not pedagogical explanations of language functioning but rules "of great abstractness and intricacy" inherent in the structure of a language, which according to Chomsky there is no reason to suppose can be brought to conscious awareness.[6] However, the spirit of the times was such that these facts were usually ignored in the rush to be in the vanguard.

In 1971, Carroll, who had first advanced the term "cognitive-code learning" in an article in 1965,[7] deplored the growing tendency to oppose "rule-governed behavior" and "habits" as incompatible concepts in language learning. He defined a "habit" as "any learned disposition to perceive, behave, or perform in a certain manner under specified circumstances." He further maintained that "to the extent that an individual's language behavior conforms to the habits of the speech community of which he is a member, we can say that his behavior is 'rule-governed'." To Carroll, a rule is an abstraction, but a habit is what has actually been learned; in other words, "the notion of 'habit' is much more fundamental, psychologically, than the notion of 'rule'."[8] This article was heeded by those who had ears to hear, but overlooked or not discovered by others.

Creative language use

Chomsky drew attention to the fact that most sentences one utters have never been heard before in that particular form. They have been created by the speakers in conformity with the grammar they have internalized (the individual's "competence," in Chomsky's terms). Miller supported this viewpoint graphically, as follows:

> If you interrupt a speaker at some randomly chosen instant, there will be, on the average, about ten words that form grammatical and meaningful continuations. . . . A simple English sentence can easily run to a length of twenty words, so elementary arithmetic tells us that there must be at least 10^{20} such sentences that a person who knows English must

---

[3] See Noam Chomsky, *Aspects of the Theory of Syntax* (Cambridge, Mass.: MIT Press, 1965), pp. 25–26, and idem, "Linguistic Theory," in *Language Teaching: Broader Contexts*, ed. Robert G. Mead, Jr., in *Reports of the Working Committees* (Middlebury, Vt.: Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1966), pp. 43–49.

[4] Kenneth Chastain, *The Development of Modern-Language Skills: Theory to Practice* (Philadelphia: Center for Curriculum Development, 1971), p. 48.

[5] Kenneth Chastain, *Developing Second-Language Skills: Theory to Practice*, 2d ed. (Chicago: Rand McNally, 1976), pp. 156–57.

[6] Noam Chomsky, *Topics in the Theory of Generative Grammar* (The Hague: Mouton, 1966), p. 10. For a more detailed discussion of Chomsky's viewpoint, see Wilga M. Rivers, "Rules, Patterns, and Creativity," *English Teaching Forum, 8*, 6 (Nov.-Dec. 1970). Reprinted in W.M. Rivers, *Speaking in Many Tongues*, 2d ed., pp. 9–20 (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House, 1976).

[7] John B. Carroll, "The Contributions of Psychological Theory and Educational Research to the Teaching of Foreign Languages," *Modern Language Journal, 49* (May 1965): 273–81.

[8] John B. Carroll, "Current Issues in Psycholinguistics and Second Language Teaching," *TESOL Quarterly, 5* (June 1971): 103–4.

> know how to deal with. Compare this productive potential with the 10^4 or 10^5 individual words we know—the reproductive component of our theory—and the discrepancy is dramatically illustrated. Putting it differently, it would take 100,000,000,000 centuries (one thousand times the estimated age of the earth) to utter all the admissible twenty-word sentences of English. Thus, the probability that you might have heard any particular twenty-word sentence before is negligible. Unless it is a cliché, every sentence must come to you as a novel combination of morphemes. Yet you can interpret it at once if you know the English language.[9]

Affirmations such as these caused teachers to take another look at the popular technique of requiring students to memorize long dialogue sentences and practice using them in the precise form memorized. This viewpoint added support to the reemphasis on teaching students to understand the operations of the grammatical system, so that they could use it effectively to generate new utterances. It also reinforced the trend toward encouraging students from the beginning stages to experiment creatively with the small amount of language they had acquired, thus learning to form new combinations to meet new circumstances. Teachers began to provide many more opportunities for spontaneous discussion and for impromptu activities that simulated actual situations in which the students might find themselves in the foreign culture. Writers of materials looked carefully at their dialogues and concentrated on producing much shorter exchanges, containing useful building blocks of language that students could adapt to express their meaning in their own way.

Hypothesis testing

The theory of an innate language acquisition device that proceeds by hypothesis testing had considerable influence for a while on studies of the acquisition of a first language by children. This led researchers interested in the acquisition of second and third languages to investigate whether a later language was acquired in the same fashion as the first language, drawing in some way on the same innate language-acquisition faculty.

A number of early studies in second-language acquisition tried to find a parallelism between the order of acquisition of a limited number of grammatical morphemes of English by first-language learners (L_1) and second-language learners (L_2).[10] This they felt would demonstrate that the L_1 and L_2 learners were following a similar developmental path and using comparable strategies in language acquisition. The order of acquisition of these morphemes was found to be significantly different for L_1 and L_2 learners, although the same morphemes did seem to be among the first acquired by both groups of learners. The acquisition order of morphemes reported for L_2 was considered by some to be an artifact of the measuring instrument.[11] Others found that the order of acquisition reported for L_2 correlated highly with some features of the language the children were hearing from their mothers (Motherese).[12] L_2 researchers then became interested in the speech L_2 learners were hearing. This reintroduced the question of the role of imitation and environmental factors versus that of innate developmental strategies in L_2 acquisition.

Research on second-language acquisition is still in its early stages and, to date, efforts have concentrated for the most part on the acquisition of a second language by young children (and some adults) in informal settings or bilingual classes.[13] Some studies of older learners in formal instructional settings are being conducted, and these should provide more useful insights for the foreign-language classroom teacher.[14]

Researchers on first-language acquisition with a strong interest in syntax observed that young children seemed to pass through a series of interim grammars, of increasing degrees of complexity, as they tested hypotheses about the form of the language they were learning. These interim grammars were described and studied synchronically as discrete syntactic systems. This approach interested those concerned with the acquisition of second or foreign languages, and the term "interlanguage" came into use to describe the kind of language a particular second-language learner was using at a given time, that is, the learner's version of the new language, which deviated in certain ways from that of a native speaker.[15] This interlanguage was considered to be the product of hypotheses the second-language learner was testing about the form of the grammar of the new language. Lack of comprehension on the part of the hearer, or inability to draw coherent meaning from a text, would lead the learner to reject one hypothesis and develop another, thus modifying the interim grammar which had produced the aberrant utterance or interpretation. Controversy raged as to the degree of interference, or negative transfer, from the first language that could be detected in the student's interlanguage and the degree to which deviations from authentic second-language forms represented developmental errors of a universal character (that is, deviant forms similar to those observable in children learning the same language as a first language or in other children from different language backgrounds learning this particular language as a second language).

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[9] George A. Miller, "The Psycholinguists," in *The Psychology of Communication: Seven Essays* (New York: Basic Books, 1967), pp. 79–80.

[10] The particular morphemes involved in these studies are listed in Nathalie Bailey, Carolyn Madden, and Stephen D. Krashen, "Is There a 'Natural Sequence' in Adult Second Language Learning?" *Language Learning, 24* (December 1974): 236.

[11] John H. Porter, "A Cross-Sectional Study of Morpheme Acquisition in First Language Learners," *Language Learning, 27* (June 1977): 59.

[12] Elissa L. Newport, Henry Gleitman, and Lila R. Gleitman, "Mother, I'd Rather Do It Myself: Some Effects and Non-effects of Maternal Speech Style," in *Talking to Children: Language Input and Acquisition*, ed. Catherine E. Snow and Charles A. Ferguson (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1977), pp. 109–49.

[13] For a useful summary and assessment of developments in this area, see Kenji Hakuta and Herlinda Cancino, "Trends in Second-Language Acquisition Research," *Harvard Educational Review, 47* (August 1977): 294–316.

[14] See, for instance, Jacquelyn Schachter, A. F. Tyson, and F. J. Diffley, "Learner Intuitions of Grammaticality," *Language Learning, 26* (June 1976): 67–76, and Herbert W. Seliger, "Does Practice Make Perfect? A Study of Interaction Patterns and L_2 Competence," *Language Learning, 27* (December 1977): 263–78.

[15] Larry Selinker, "Interlanguage," *International Review of Applied Linguistics in Language Teaching, 10* (August 1972): 209–31.

Some L_2 researchers discounted the notion of interference, or negative transfer, from first-language use rather vehemently, because they saw it as support for a habit-formation view of language acquisition. (Positive transfer is more difficult to distinguish from new learning.) Later longitudinal L_2 acquisition studies, however, brought to light instances of what looked very like negative transfer of L_1 features, or at least of L_1 concepts in L_2 use, although the nature and degree of such transfer is still under investigation. It has been suggested that what has been observed represents hypothesis testing, in the sense that L_2 learners are testing the hypothesis that L_2 structure = L_1 structure. It may also represent the natural process of falling back on what one knows and adapting it, when faced with a situation for which one does not have the L_2 linguistic means.

Whatever the final issue of this controversy, foreign-language classroom teachers were rather bemused and bewildered to be told that negative transfer from L_1 was practically nonexistent, since they had regularly observed instances of something that looked very like it in the speech and writing of their L_2 learners.

The hypothesis-testing and interlanguage theories slowly began to affect classroom practice. Teachers who had been trained to structure classroom situations so that students would not make errors, or hear errors from others, were now urged to accept errors in second-language production as indicators of progress through interim grammars and as guides to the incorrect hypotheses their students had formed. Others pointed out that a study of the errors made by individual students would reveal to the teacher the strategies these students were employing in trying to learn the language. Attention was also drawn to the problem of fossilized forms, that is, incorrect forms that remain in the speech and writing of student learners despite the fact that they have been taught, and appear to understand, the rules. Since, in testing hypotheses, a serious disconfirmation causes one to seek another hypothesis that fits the facts and to adjust one's operation accordingly, this well-documented existence of fossilized forms that persist, often for years, in the speech of well-informed second-language speakers has to be taken into consideration as an awkward fact by supporters of the hypothesis-testing approach.

Natural language learning

The convergence of the emphases just discussed has led to the emergence of a new-old approach to the learning of another language. Called "natural language learning," it recalls efforts in the middle of the nineteenth century to simulate in the classroom an environment that will approximate the context in which children learn their first language, as they create utterances to express their own thoughts.[16]

In its latest form, this methodology does not overlook the need that adolescent or adult learners feel for the security of structured learning. Students study the grammar of the language out of class (as programmed or individualized preparation based on the textbook or language-laboratory practice), so that class time can be devoted to communicative interaction from a basis of linguistic knowledge. This means skill-getting out of class and skill-using in group activities in class. The proponents of "natural language learning" maintain that, in this way, the innate capacities to acquire a language that all individuals possess will be tapped; students will have ample opportunities to test their hypotheses about the nature of the new language; their interim grammars will be accepted and tolerated while they are refining their hypotheses through individual study, and they will get much practice in creating new utterances in actual communication.

Meaning in social contexts

The field of sociolinguistics, or sociology of language, had been growing rapidly during the 1960s and 1970s. This branch of linguistics concerns itself particularly with language as it is used for communication within the social group. It employs the concepts and research techniques of sociology and social psychology, as well as linguistics. It brings to light interesting information about language in organized communicative interaction within a community, about domains of language use, speech varieties within a community, the language behavior of ethnic groups, bilingualism and multilingualism, and language planning at a national level. Clearly, these are subjects of great concern to the language teacher.

Communicative competence

Hymes elaborated a concept of "communicative competence," which soon began to affect the foreign-language teaching community. To Hymes, the most novel and important aspect of sociolinguistic research was to establish the "rules, patterns, purposes, and consequences of language use, and to account for their interrelations." According to Hymes, the child learning the first language acquires, along with a system of grammar, "a system of its use, regarding persons, places, purposes, other modes of communication, . . . patterns of the sequential use of language in conversation, address, standard routines."[17] In other words, "communicative competence" represents "what a speaker needs to know to communicate effectively in culturally significant settings."[18]

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[16] For a description of this approach to natural language learning, see Tracy D. Terrell, "A Natural Approach to Second Language Acquisition and Learning," *Modern Language Journal, 61* (November 1977): 325–37.

Although the term "communicative competence" was batted around as though it meant "creative language use," Hymes's concepts soon began to have considerable effect. Writers of materials and classroom teachers realized that students needed to know more than how to express ideas in correct grammatical patterns (or in incorrect patterns, as they struggled to express ideas and concepts for which they did not yet have the linguistic means). Students needed also to know the culturally acceptable ways of interacting orally with others—appropriate levels of language to use in different situations; conversational gambits; what gestures and other body language were appropriate; when one might intervene in conversation and when one should wait for others; what questions and comments might be made and which would offend. They also needed to understand the message content of stress and intonation.

As the study of the culture in which the second language is embedded became a preeminent preoccupation in foreign-language teaching, these matters began to receive more emphasis. Teachers and students alike realized that, if this type of cultural competence was to be acquired, they needed opportunities to interact with native speakers in natural settings. Teachers, therefore, encouraged participation in such activities as exchange programs and study abroad, ethnic festivals, and language camps, where communicative interaction might take place in authentic social contexts. Where it was appropriate, students were encouraged to mingle with the local community of speakers of the language they were learning, and help them when they could. Teaching aides and paraprofessionals were also recruited from the local community in some cases to add authenticity to the classroom experience.

Semantics and pragmatics

Meanwhile, the theoretical linguists had been exploring new areas. The case grammar of Fillmore,[19] the generative semantics of John R. Ross, George Lakoff, and James D. McCawley,[20] and the meaning-structure grammar of Chafe[21] all declared semantics to be basic to any theoretical model of language. With the emphasis on semantics, pragmatics rose in importance, since meaning was seen to be dependent to a large degree on the situations in which speech acts occurred. Pragmatics had been particularly stressed by the functionalists whose interests lay in the study of language in use. The purposes language serves in normal interaction were seen by the functionalists to be basic to the determination of syntactic functions.[22]

These approaches influenced work on first-language acquisition. Reseachers like R. W. Brown and I. M. Schlesinger found the early utterances of young children to be more readily explicable in semantic terms, such as agent, action, instrument, patient, experiencer, or what Brown called "semantic roles." Others preferred to emphasize functions. Bruner found that "use is a powerful determinant of rule structures,"[23] and Halliday analyzed his child's initial utterances in terms of distinct functions (instrumental, regulatory, interactional, personal, heuristic, imaginative, representational, and ritual).[24]

Language teachers found the functional approach of more value for application than some of the more abstract linguistic models of the preceding decade.[25] There was a growing emphasis on designing classroom activities, so that the language use elicited would reflect normal purposes of language in interactional contexts. Teachers began to recognize the artificiality of many language exercises and adapt them so that they reflected more authentic uses of language.[26]

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[17] Dell Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics: An Ethnographic Approach* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974), p. 75.

[18] John J. Gumperz and Dell Hymes, *Directions in Sociolinguistics: The Ethnography of Communication* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1972), p. vii, and Dell Hymes, "The Ethnography of Speaking," in *Readings in the Sociology of Language*, ed. Joshua A. Fishman (The Hague: Mouton, 1968), pp. 99–138.

[19] Charles J. Fillmore, "The Case for Case," in *Universals in Linguistic Theory*, ed. Emmon Bach and Robert T. Harms (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968), pp. 1–88.

[20] See George Lakoff, "On Generative Semantics," in *Semantics: An Interdisciplinary Reader in Philosophy, Linguistics, and Psychology* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1971), pp. 232–96.

[21] Wallace L. Chafe, *Meaning and the Structure of Language* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1970).

[22] For a fuller discussion of these developments, see Wilga M. Rivers, "Language and Cognition: Directions and Implications," in *Language in American Life*, ed. E. Michael Gerli, James E. Alatis, and Richard I. Brod (Washington, D.C.: Georgetown University Press, 1978), pp. 32–44.

[23] Jerome S. Bruner, "From Communication to Language—A Psychological Perspective," *Cognition 3*, 3 (1974–75): 283.

[24] Michael A.K. Halliday, *Learning How to Mean: Explorations in the Development of Language* (London: Edward Arnold, 1975; New York: Elsevier–North Holland, 1977).

[25] For an application of Halliday's functions to language teaching, see Wilga M. Rivers, "The Natural and the Normal in Language Learning," *Language Learning, Special Issue 4*, (January 1976), ed. H.D. Brown, pp. 1–8.

There were proposals to reconstruct the language syllabus so that learning communicative conventions would become as important as learning grammatical conventions. Wilkins proposed a "notional syllabus" that is "organized in terms of the purposes for which people are learning language and the kinds of language performance that are necessary to meet those purposes."[27] A notional syllabus implies a careful analysis of particular communicative situations in order to identify what students should most usefully be able to communicate in those situations. Only then can one decide the most appropriate forms to be learned by the students. "In short, the linguistic content is planned according to the semantic demands of the learner."[28]

A notional syllabus would deal with such categories as time, quantity, space, relational meaning, judgment and evaluation, suasion, argument, rational inquiry and exposition, personal emotions, and emotional relations, rather than such traditional grammatical areas as definite and indefinite articles, moods, tenses, relative and interrogative pronouns. For the learning sequence, Wilkins proposed a cyclical, rather than linear, presentation of concepts and functions, so that as they advance students will be learning to express the same semantic notions with more finesse and nuance. Role-playing becomes an important activity in this type of learning.

LANGUAGE AND COGNITION

Early in the 1970s, some cognitive psychologists who were interested in language acquisition, production, and comprehension began to find the abstract theoretical models of transformational-generative linguists too constricting in their research.[29] From trying to show experimentally that models proposed by the linguists had psychological reality, they returned to developing their own models from their research findings and testing these empirically. Others devoted their energies to the promising and burgeoning areas of perception and computer simulation of cognitive processing. It seemed to many that what might be innate was not so much a specific capacity to acquire languages as general cognitive and perceptual processes that were basic to other areas of human learning as well. Thus, it became easier to align psychological studies of language acquisition and use with the findings of Piaget on the stages of cognitive development from infancy to maturity.

Just as much new information was becoming available on perceptual processes, sections of the language-teaching profession were turning their attention to listening and reading. Postovsky advocated an initial period of listening to a new language, with writing as a supporting activity, before students would attempt to produce anything orally. He considered this a more efficient approach than practicing structures and memorizing sentences of the language. In his experiments, students were not expected to begin to produce sentences themselves for some time, unless they felt like doing so.[30] Whether teachers accepted this view or not, they began to pay much more attention to developing the listening skill as a most important area of language learning. It was realized that for developing ability to understand native speakers, students needed much practice in listening to authentic materials recorded in natural situations, rather than to artificial materials concocted for school purposes.[31] Reading again achieved prominence as an important area of language learning and much attention was paid to new information on the reading process as "a psycholinguistic guessing game."[32]

Research into cognitive processes is an area that teachers will watch with interest as they look for guidance in improving the teaching and learning of languages. As teachers of second or foreign languages, we are interested in how human beings perceive messages, in speech or writing, and how they process and interpret them. We are interested in the way new information is transformed by receivers as they relate it to information already stored; how what they receive is recoded and organized for storage, not as atomic items but within complex semantic networks; how recoded information moves from short-term to long-term storage, and how it is retrieved. We are interested in forgetting, which is intricately involved with the concept of memory as an active process, not as a repository of inert items. This leads us to what will be remembered. Here we are at one of the interfaces between cognitive and dynamic psychology, because what we process from what we perceive is related to individual motivation and meaningfulness. We can learn much also from studies of concept development, particularly cross-cultural conceptualization, and for the teaching of another culture we need to understand the formation and retention of stereotypes and how these may be adapted and changed.

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[26] See Rivers, *Speaking in Many Tongues*, chap. 2, "Talking off the Tops of Their Heads" and W.M. Rivers and M.S. Temperley, *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1978). See also companion volumes for the teaching of French, German and Spanish (1975–78).

[27] David A. Wilkins, *Notional Syllabuses* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 13.

[28] Ibid., p. 19.

[29] As one example, see Dan I. Slobin, *Psycholinguistics* (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Co., 1971), p. 24.

[30] Valerian Postovsky, "Why Not Start Speaking Later?" in *Viewpoints on English as a Second Language*, ed. Marina Burt, Heidi Dulay, and Mary Finocchiaro (New York: Regents Publishing Co., 1977), pp. 17–26.

[31] See Rivers and Temperley, *A Practical Guide to the Teaching of English as a Second or Foreign Language*, chap. 3, "Listening," and parallel volumes for French, German, and Spanish.

[32] Kenneth S. Goodman, "Reading: A Psycholinguistic Guessing Game," *Journal of the Reading Specialist*, 6 (May 1967): 126–35, and *Psycholinguistics and Reading*, ed. Frank Smith (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1973).

THE AFFECTIVE ELEMENT

Sensitive teachers have always recognized the determining role that the affective component plays in interpersonal communication. Students who do not feel at ease with their teacher and their fellow students are reluctant to attempt to express themselves in another language—an experience that involves not only stripping oneself of the protective devices that refined use of a well-known language provides, but also returning to a much less mature level of expression that can make the adolescent or adult learner feel both foolish and vulnerable. Once language learning becomes more than the study of rules and paradigms, and their exemplification and demonstration in reading and writing, and moves toward real communication of ideas, emotions, and aspirations, dynamic and personality psychology have a contribution to make. For these reasons, affect-based approaches to learning began to have an impact on foreign-language teaching in the 1970s, in particular humanistic psychology, as elaborated by Maslow, Rogers, and Brown.[33]

Maslow maintained that the individual has a hierarchy of needs to be satisfied: at base level, there are physiological needs to be filled; then, in ascending order, needs for security, belongingness, esteem for self and for others, and finally self-realization, which cannot be achieved while the lower-level needs remain unsatisfied. These needs of the individual lead to complex interrelationships within a group, the individuals of which are in need of support and fulfillment at different levels of the hierarchy at any one time. Since any genuine communication requires that one feel at ease in the situation, these interrelationships among students and between teacher and student affect the success of the communicative interaction, even apart from differing levels of language control. Affective factors also determine what is meaningful and relevant for the students at any particular stage. Brown's confluent education emphasizes the importance of working with both feelings and intellect at the same time in both individual and group learning.

In practice, the humanistic approach has resulted in the inclusion in language-learning materials of vocabulary and activities for expressing one's feelings, for sharing one's values and viewpoints with others, and for developing a better understanding of their feelings and needs. A foreign-language class is a particularly suitable environment for meeting affective needs, because much of the activity can take the form of role-playing, simulation games, and small-group discussions. Masks and puppets help the more inhibited to express themselves with less risk. The expressive arts (impromptu drama, music, and song) allow for free flow of imagination and self-expression. Yet all of these activities require the student to seek the most appropriate forms in the foreign language to express nuances of meaning.

With this reemphasis on individual worth and difference, foreign-language teachers became conscious of the fact that individual students have preferred modalities of learning: some learn best through the ear, some through the eye. They also learn at different rates and employ quite different strategies for understanding and retaining the material to be learned. With this new understanding, teachers were no longer satisfied with a monolithic "what is good for one is good for all" approach. The 1970s saw a flowering of experimentation with individualized learning programs, diversified content, and courses of differing lengths and intensity

WHAT OF THE FUTURE?

The many new directions opened up by research in linguistics and psychology have provided teachers with many ideas for program development and teaching approaches. By their very diversity, they have liberated teachers to plan and adapt their programs with due attention to the objectives of their students and the needs of the area where they are teaching. Teachers now feel free to develop the style of teaching with which they themselves feel most at ease, for it is only by feeling at ease themselves that they can set their students at ease in the potentially anxiety-creating environment of the active second-language class. They will continue to learn more about language from the linguists and about language-learning processes from the psychologists, but it is only the classroom teacher who is experiencing daily the interaction of these two who can finally decide the most appropriate approach to teaching and course content in the local situation. Foreign-language teachers of the future must make their own decisions as informed professionals, if study of another language is to provide the mind-expanding, humanistic experience, the insight into other ways of thinking and behaving, and the career skills which are its potential contributions to general education in our schools. □

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[33] See Abraham H. Maslow, *Motivation and Personality*, 2d ed. (New York: Harper and Row, 1970); Carl R. Rogers, *Freedom to Learn* (Columbus, Ohio: Charles Merrill, 1969); and George Isaac Brown, *Human Teaching for Human Learning: An Introduction to Confluent Education* (New York: Viking Press, 1971).

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Meaning Is in the Eye of the Beholder

Most people would agree that it is not necessary to understand every word of a passage in order to discover its meaning. In the first place, not every word is essential; secondly, some unknown words can be guessed if the reader uses contextual clues. The better readers, it is said, are those who use such clues more efficiently: they are better guessers.

An experiment in reading comprehension

As a preliminary to presenting the points we wish to make on this subject, we ask you, dear reader, to read the following passage, using whatever contextual clues you can to detect the meaning of unknown words (represented by blanks in the text). As you read, keep in mind the basic questions every student of reading comprehension must answer: What is the subject matter of the passage? What is the main point the author is trying to convey about the subject? What is his attitude toward the subject? Also, suggest a possible title for the paragraph. Here is the passage:

> Ancient ________ more ________ than stone are rarely ________. ________, the series of lectures of ________ ________ and complication of ________ can be followed well enough to ________ the ________ and ________ but generally continuous progress through prehistory. The ________ ________ progress in historic times is very well a written record and is familiar to all of us in general out of the line at last. The whole ________ from stones before to electronic computers is a natural and ________ ________ of the biological capacities of an unusual spaces. It is unequally wonderful, and from the time when, ________ we stand too much ________ ________ ________ our own products, let us remember than a ________ computer is merrily a rapid and automated ________ for what are the quantity to counting on fingers.

If your efforts did not bear much fruit, it is because we have rewritten the original paragraph according to a student's-eye view of its meaning. We discovered this blurred vision when we tested a sample of sixty students on their knowledge of seventy words in a text that included the above paragraph.[1] Results showed that, on the average, students were not familiar with, and could not guess, those words we have deleted.[2]

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[1] These were first-year Hebrew-speaking university students taking an EFL course in order to read academic bibliography. They had already had seven to eight years of high-school English and had passed the Israeli matriculation examination.

Another strange phenomenon you might have noticed is that some phrases in our paragraph do not make sense:

line	*phrase*
7-8	"progress in historic times is very well a *written record*"
8-9	"familiar to all of us in general *out of the line at last*"
9-10	"from stones *before* to electronic computers"
11-12	"biological capacities of an unusual *spaces*"
12	"*unequally* wonderful"
15-16	"computer is *merrily* a rapid and automated ______"
16-17	"for what *are the quantity* to counting on fingers

The italicized words in the above phrases were not in the original text. They are the words that a number of our students substituted for the original words in our experiment. For example, when asked for the meaning of the word *merely*, they gave the equivalent translation of the word *merrily;* for *outline, out of the line*. Thus, by combining words unknown to the student of average English proficiency[3] and his various misinterpretations of certain words, we "reconstructed" the original paragraph to show what it is that our average student reader sees, and on the basis of which he is expected to decipher the meaning of the text, which may be very different from the meaning he beholds.

Wrong "preconceived notions"

The original paragraph is given below. Words underlined once are those the average student did not know and could not guess; those underlined twice are words the students *thought* they knew but actually confused with other words—that is, words about which they have wrong "preconceived notions."[4]

> Ancient tools more perishable than stone are rarely preserved. Nevertheless, the course of increasing diversity and complication of tools can be followed well enough to demonstrate the gradual and inconstant but generally continual progress through prehistory. The tremendously accelerated progress in historic times is very well documented and is familiar to all of us in general outline at least. The whole sweep from stone axes to electronic computers is a natural and comprehensible extension of the biological capacities of an unusual species. It is uniquely wonderful, and yet, lest we stand too much in awe of our own products, let us remember that a digital computer is merely a rapid and automated tool for what amounts to counting on fingers.

What is evident from a comparison of the original paragraph with the one "beheld" by the student is that there are two obstacles to reading comprehension. One is the fact that students have wrong "preconceived notions" about certain words. For example, a student may think that *course* is the same as *coarse* for one of two reasons: (*a*) he has never heard of one of them, or (*b*) though he might have learned both words at some time in the past, only one of them comes to mind. Another obstacle is the inability of students to guess other, unknown, words.

The errors in the distorted paragraph show that wrong "preconceived notions" fall into several different patterns.[5]

Pattern	*Word in Original Text*	*Misinterpreted as*
1. wrong meaning of a polyseme	*since (because)*	"from the time when"
2. confused synophone[6]	*merely*	"merrily"
3. misinterpreted morphological troublemaker	*outline*	"out of the line"
4. misinterpreted idiom	*amounts to*	"are the quantity of"

Clearly, to improve our students' lexical comprehension, we should try to help them overcome the two problems mentioned above.

Exercises dealing with preconceived notions

The following exercises have been constructed to sensitize students to the problem of "preconceived notions," so that they may overcome their tendency to be satisfied with the first meaning they find. (These exercises were constructed to include lexical problems in the entire text, and were not limited to the single paragraph shown above.)

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[2] One can argue, and rightly, that a text with too many unfamiliar words should not be given to a class. But the reality is that in the course of their academic studies, our students have to face authentic academic bibliography with a lot of unfamiliar words, and our text was of a degree of difficulty expected of such students.

[3] The average student, for this experiment, is defined as one whose grade was between 60 and 70 at the end of his EFL university course.

[4] By "correct guessing" we mean the ability to detect the meaning of a word from context. For a detailed discussion of "preconceived notions" and lexical guessing patterns, see Marsha Bensoussan and Batia Laufer, "Lexical Guessing in Context: To What Extent Do Students Use Context in Guessing?" forthcoming.

[5] Bensoussan and Laufer, *op. cit*.

[6] For details see Batia Laufer, "A Problem in Vocabulary Learning: Synophones," *English Language Teaching Journal*, April 1981.

I. Exercises to Eradicate the Wrong "Preconceived Notions"

A. *Recognition and evocation of previous knowledge*—to be discussed by teacher and students in the classroom

Synophone confusion:

Text: "Human language is a system of . . . behavioral *adaptation*."

Teacher: *Adaptation* means "adjustment." What word do you know that sounds or looks similar?

(Our students would probably say "adoption." By making them aware of the similarity in form between the two words as well as the difference in meaning, we might reduce the chances of future confusion.)

B. *Discrimination between confusing words or meaning(s) of a word*—written or spoken exercises.

1. *Polysemes* (Choose the most suitable answer.)

"I'm concerned with a man's nature in a rather broad *sense*."

Sense here means:

a. feeling *b*. meaning *c*. logic
d. understanding

Or: The word *sense* has the same meaning as in the following:

a. He has a keen *sense* of hearing.
b. This man has no *sense* of humor.
c. There's a lot of *sense* in what he says.
d. In what *sense* are you using the word?

2. *Synophones* (Complete the blank space with any suitable word.)

"The _________ of increasing diversity and complication of tools can be followed well enough."

The missing word is: curse
course
coarse
cause

How does the meaning of the sentence change with each different word?

3. *Morphological troublemakers* (True / False)

"Human language is a system of *interpersonal* communication."

Interpersonal here means "within the person."

True / False. Explain your answer.

4. *Idioms* (translation to mother tongue)

"A digital computer is merely a rapid tool for what *amounts to* counting on fingers."

Translate the above sentence into Hebrew.

C. *Controlled (guided) sentence writing*—actual use of the problematic words

Construct a sentence based on the content of the text, using the following words, so that there are two clauses connected by the conjunction *yet*.

progress wonderful
yet
computer rapid tool counting on fingers

(The sentence we might expect would look something like this: "The progress in toolmaking has been wonderful; yet a computer might be seen as only a rapid tool which does the same job as counting on fingers.")

It is obvious that any of the above problematic word categories can be practiced in any one of the exercise formats (e.g., morphological troublemakers can be practiced through multiple-choice exercises, translation, fill-in, etc.).

Exercises in using contextual clues

We also constructed exercises to aid in overcoming students' inability to use contextual clues, the second obstacle to comprehension mentioned above.

II. Exercises for Guessing in Context (sensitizing exercises to be done before reading the text)

A. In each of the following sentences there is a word missing. What *part of speech* would you expect this word to be? Explain your answer.

1. "The question 'What is man?' is probably the most _________ that can be asked by man."
a. noun *b*. verb *c*. adjective *d*. adverb

2. "Nonhuman _________ are, in effect, interjections."
a. noun *b*. verb *c*. adjective *d*. adverb
e. conjunction

B. Using your knowledge of roots and affixes, can you guess the meaning of the following words?

anew
falsities
however
inconstant
incomparably
interpersonal
vocables

Note: Although one technique for guessing is the use of word morphology, this technique may also be misused. An attempt to remedy this problem appears in I.B.3., *Morphological troublemakers*, above.

C. Sometimes the structure of the phrase or the sentence can guide your guessing. Choose the most suitable word to fill the blank. Explain your answer.

1. ________ we do retain that older system along with our wholly new and wholly distinct system of true language.
   a. Still *b*. That *c*. Knowledge *d*. Essential
2. It is amusing that the human reaction to a bad smell is practically the same as in all other ________, down even to the most primitive.
   a. men *b*. primates *c*. smells *d*. systems

D. Sometimes words collocate with other words. For each blank space, choose the word that is most suitable. Explain your answer.

1. The biological study of man cannot by itself ________ a satisfactorily complete answer to this question.
   a. ask *b*. provide *c*. reverse *d*. take
   (*answers are "provided"*)
2. The whole ________ from stone axes to electronic computers is an extension.
   a. sweep *b*. detail *c*. man *d*. tool
   (*the sweep from . . . to . . .*)

E. Indicate whether the underlined word or phrase has positive (+) or negative (−) connotations. Explain your answer.

1. That distinction has been blurred by imprecise use of the word *language* not only in popular speech but also by some scientists who should know better.
2. But unless they accept the nature of men, they are merely fictional fancies or falsities, however interesting they may be.

Although it is practically impossible to guess the precise meaning of the underlined words, the student can nevertheless get a feeling for whether their connotations are positive or negative by using the context of the sentence. In (1) the word *imprecise* would suggest the negative connotation of *blurred*, and in (2) the underlined clause is negative, since it is contrasted with *interesting*, which has positive connotations.

F. Sometimes clues to the meaning of an unknown word appear in the sentence as words or phrases of more or less similar meaning. This phenomenon is known as *redundancy*. For each blank, give two possible words that might be suitable.[7]

1. The whole sweep from stone axes to electronic computers is a natural and ________ extension.
   ____
   ____
   (*natural and normal; natural and comprehensible*)
2. That is made most clear by comparison with other animal ________, which most nearly resemble human speech.
   ____
   ____
   (*other animal sounds . . . resemble human speech; other animal voices . . . resemble human speech*)

G. Sometimes the meaning of an unknown word can be guessed from contrasting words, phrases, or ideas.

1. Unless they accept, by ________ or by implication, the nature of man . . .
   ____
   ____
   (*by specification or by implication; by fact or by implication*)
2. They reflect the individual's physical or, more frequently, ________ state.
   ____
   ____
   (*physical or . . . emotional; physical or . . . mental*)

These exercises are not meant to substitute for explicit teaching of vocabulary. Not all words can be guessed, because sometimes the context contains no clues, or else the clues themselves appear in words that may be unfamiliar to the foreign-language learner.[8] Therefore, in order for lexical guessing to take place, the reader must have a sufficiently large and clear context on which to base his guesses. Thus, explicit vocabulary teaching will result in a better command of vocabulary, and this, in turn, will provide a larger context, while the exercises focusing on eradication of "preconceived notions" should eventually provide a clearer context. Only after improving the vision of the blurry-eyed beholder by enlarging his context and sweeping away his prior lexical confusions, can the teacher expect his students to guess some of the remaining unknown words.

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[7] Two words are requested in order to dispel the misconception that there can be only one possible correct answer.

[8] The experiment appearing in Bensoussan and Laufer, *op. cit.*, showed that students are able to guess only 24 percent of the words.

Some Suggestions for the EFL Conversation Class

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In teaching and observing conversation classes in EFL, I have found many problems, and to solve them I have developed, through the years, the following suggestions:[1]

1. Speak the language being learned.
2. Help the students understand how they can acquire the language.
3. Avoid talking *about* the language.
4. Draw on the passive knowledge of your students.
5. To draw on their passive knowledge, get the students involved.
6. Strive for a classroom atmosphere with a community spirit geared towards learning to communicate in the foreign language.

1: Speak the language being learned

Learning to converse in a foreign language requires frequent practice in speaking and listening. Thus, the first priority for both students and teacher should be using the language.

I have observed, however, that too often this is not the case. Students find security in reverting frequently to their mother tongue. Often the teacher feels pressured to explain things (e.g., instructions, rules, a point of grammar, a function) in the students' mother tongue. While working in a teacher-training program for nonnative (and native) speakers, I was faced with such statements (spoken in beautiful English) as "The students can't understand unless I explain it in my native language," "It takes too long to explain what I want them to do," and "I'm the same nationality. They expect me to speak in our language." My answer to statements like these is from Diller:

> To get a person to think in the language and to use it for communication, we must provide the student with something serious to think about. We must provide something challenging. There is nothing more challenging in a foreign language than trying to learn something new while using the language. If the teacher reverts to the student's native language every time he has something serious to say, then he loses his best opportunities to get the student to concentrate and to think in the foreign language. (1978:77)

2: Help the students understand how they can acquire the language

Students bring with them expectations and attitudes from past learning experiences. Many students have studied in programs that were based on such premises as these: (1) language learning is a habit-forming process, and "correct" language should be drilled into the student by the teacher; and (2) students cannot learn from their mistakes. An incorrect response is seen as the beginning of an incorrect habit (Diller 1978:49).

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[1] I sincerely thank Steve Merritt and John Peters of Heuristic Associates for their insight.

Teaching based on such premises often results in defensive learning.

> Such learning sees the foreign language as a vast set of sounds and words and rules and patterns that are to be transferred from the teacher or textbook into the mind of the student. In this view, the teacher is seen as hurling darts at the learner. If a dart strikes an unprotected area (that is, if the learner makes a mistake in speaking or understanding), the experience is painful. (Stevick 1976:110)

If a student has experienced, and perhaps suffered through, this type of learning, (1) he will probably not be willing to speak a great deal, (2) he will expect the teacher to lead the exercises, (3) he may not be aware that he can learn from mistakes, and (4) he won't be aware that he can learn from his classmates.

To counteract such tendencies I try to teach the students that (1) to acquire the language, especially speaking skills, you need to speak a lot; (2) to acquire the language, *you* have to initiate the process and raise questions within yourself and search out the answers for yourself (the teacher can only provide you with information, feedback, and encouragement); (3) to acquire the language, you have to go through a process that includes making mistakes (if you make a mistake, this is good, because if you actively pay attention to your mistakes and especially the corrections, you can learn very rapidly); and (4) to acquire the language, you need people with whom to share its use. Native speakers can, of course, share the language with you. However, so can your classmates. Since each member of the class has his own unique experiences in learning, each one will know different things. If you listen, and ask for and accept feedback from other class members, you will learn a great deal.

3: Avoid talking *about* the language

It is easy to talk about language. In fact, you can even talk about talking about language, as I am doing now. However, many students who, for many years, have heard the teacher talk about language and have studied texts about how to use the language cannot communicate even simple ideas. The students must discover how to use the language through their own *experience*. This does not mean the teacher should say nothing. The teacher can introduce functions, wisely correct usage, and guide the students through exercises. If this is done simply and with few words, the students can gain a great deal. If it is done in an overly detailed manner, the students will only gain more passive knowledge.

4: Draw on the students' passive knowledge, and help them to make it active

Since many students have studied the language in a passive setting, they often enter a conversation class unable to express themselves in it. However, they usually have at least two important assets: an abundant store of knowledge about grammar and language in general, and their own unique experience. The teacher can draw on these assets by giving the students as many chances to speak as possible. In other words, "It's not our job to cram the student's head full of new facts, but to take what he/she knows and help him/her to expand it" (McLean 1980:19). We should try to make the students' passive knowledge active.

5: To draw on the students' passive knowledge, get them involved

To get the students involved, the teacher needs to "do exercises where the students are actively searching out, discovering, and depicting" (Stevick 1976:25). This includes doing exercises in which the students speak much more than the teacher.

Many types of approaches and exercises can fulfill this purpose. Strip stories, Via's technique using plays, role playing and simulation exercises, problem-solving exercises, buzz groups, community-language learning, and the silent way all get the students involved in their own and each other's learning process.

As to which approach the teacher should choose, I agree with Mullins (1980), who suggests that the successful foreign-language teacher—the one who is self-confident professionally—is the one who can eclectically choose his techniques on the basis of his own personality, the students' personalities, and the local situation.

6: The teacher should consciously maintain control of the exercises

How successful an exercise is often depends on how well it is presented. Facilitators have long known the importance of consciously thinking about and organizing an exercise before presenting it to a group.

To *facilitate* means to make learning easier. This concept is certainly relevant to teaching EFL skills. If I can make the process of learning easier for the students, I am doing my job. Our job as teachers is not only to present information, exercises, and a means for the students to get feedback, but also to help them learn as quickly and easily as possible. Learning should and can be easy, and the way the teacher presents an exercise has much to do with how easy it is for the students to acquire the language.

Pfeiffer and Jones (1972) present a model for facilitating an exercise so that it is clear for the learner. It consists, basically, of three stages: (1) brief, (2) do, and (3) debrief.

To *brief* means to frame the exercise or define exactly what task is expected of the learner. This includes directions, time limits, rules, etc. In EFL it is important that the students know exactly what they are to do. They should also know, in most cases, what the exercise is designed to teach them (e.g., how to request, when to apologize, or to understand the behavior differences between accepting a gift in their culture and, say, American culture).

To *do* means to carry out the instructions given. It is important for both students and teacher to comply with the instructions.

To *debrief* means to go over what happened during the exercise, and to discuss what was difficult or easy. If the exercise is a problem-solving exercise with only one possible solution, it is a time to help the students discuss how well they did and the reasons for their success or failure. Unfortunately, many teachers ignore this step. I think it is important, as it often acts as a catalyst in helping students realize their abilities, their weaknesses, and what they need to learn within themselves. It also serves as an opportunity for the teacher to maintain his authoritarian role as well as provide motivation for the students.

7: Strive for a classroom atmosphere with a community spirit geared towards learning to communicate in the foreign language

The teacher can best understand his own limits in creating such an atmosphere by understanding what motivates the students. Each student will be motivated differently, depending on his experience. The foreign-language teacher often discovers that primary motivation for students is ''instrumental'' (Lambert 1963). Many students study the language in order to pass a test, obtain a degree, get a good job, or go abroad for university study. Often these far-off goals lack immediate relevance for the students. Creating a community spirit, in the sense of having the students help one another acquire the language, is difficult under such circumstances. Students who are ''integratively'' (Lambert 1963) motivated tend to help one another more by providing feedback, raising questions, and generally encouraging one another.

An ''integrative'' motivation is based on such factors as general interest in the language, attitudes toward the teacher, and ability to strive toward goals (Stevick 1976:48). The talented teacher, through his own personality, can help to encourage students to become more integratively motivated. For example, if the teacher creates a favorable and realistic image of himself, of the language he is teaching and the culture to which it relates, the students will tend to be more attracted toward the language and its culture than if these are presented in an unfavorable way. The teacher can also make the language as interesting as possible through the types of exercises he uses.

Much of this has to do with the teacher's own personality and behavior, which he needs to be constantly aware of and which he must change if necessary. A teacher who is defensive and over-critical, who lacks candor and has little empathy for the students' opinions and feelings, will not be able to create a climate favorable for learning beyond the ''instrumental'' level (e.g., a grade). In such an environment, a community spirit will never evolve, unless it's against the teacher!

If, however, a teacher builds what Barnlund (1968) calls ''a constructive communicative relationship'' with the students, a more favorable climate for learning results. To do this, the teacher (1) must be willing to become involved with the students, and to show a positive regard for them; he should not try to manipulate them into doing what he wants, nor should he try to stop them from saying things that displease him; (2) must be empathetic toward the students' problems and feelings, being especially careful not to project his own perceptions onto the student; (3) must allow a permissive psychological climate, sharing feelings and withholding judgment (students who feel they are being judged every time they speak are not going to speak a great deal); (4) must listen openly to the students, focusing on the things they say through inflections and nonverbal behavior as well as through words, and not answering until they have finished speaking; (5) must be genuine and consistent in dealing with the students—being honest with them, and making sure the things he says and does accurately reflect his real thoughts and feelings.

If the teacher comes from a different cultural background than the students, he should become knowledgeable about the cultural basis of the students' behavior, and develop a constructive communicative relationship with them. This can help the teacher to help the students realize the differences between cultures (e.g., in America the status of members of a group is not based on age; in America long pauses irritate or confuse the listener; etc.). In turn, the teacher can help create a ''new cultural experience'' outside the learners' own native cultural boundaries. As the students come to accept the teacher as an ''all right'' sort of person, they will be more likely to accept his suggestions on how to help one another learn and how to behave when speaking with him or with people from his or other cultures. A classroom atmosphere

continued on page 28

Notions and Functions: How Content Affects Form in EFL/ESL

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Recent thinking by linguists and language teachers, initially prompted by the task of establishing "threshold levels" for the major European languages within the Council of Europe, has resulted in such useful language-learning objectives as "communicative competence" and the "notional syllabus" (often given grander and more explicit style as the "functional-notional syllabus"). Respected writers in TEFL/TESL (Alexander 1976, Bung 1973, Dobson 1979, van Ek 1973, Finocchiaro 1979, Stratton 1977, Trim 1973, and Wilkins 1976, among others) have expanded on the basic utilitarian framework, and considered it both as a basic objective and, to a lesser extent, as an approach that may affect the methods and techniques to be used in TEFL/TESL. It is the latter consideration to which this article is addressed.

Defining the objective

First, however, a basic definition of this new framework, or objective, will clarify our thinking and provide, perhaps, a methodological springboard. The key work in recent pedagogical thinking, it seems to me, is the term *syllabus*. J.L.M. Trim saw the basic assumption thus:

> By far the largest single group of (language) learners everywhere, consists of people who want to prepare themselves, in a general way, to be able to communicate socially on straightforward everyday matters with people who come their way, and to be able to get around and lead a reasonably normal social life when they visit another country. This is not simply a matter of buying bread and toothpaste and getting repairs carried out on a car. People want to be able to make contact with each other as people, to exchange information and opinions, talk about experiences, likes and dislikes, to explore our similarities and differences, the unity in diversity of our complicated and crowded continent.[1]

We could replace the European limitations of the last word by *world* or *English-speaking world*, and it would be just as relevant. Moreover, it is implied that language learning is more than phrase-book-type crash courses which we could stigmatize as being of the "postillion-lightning school," after the infamous, if apocryphal, phrase.[2] However, an objective should state in more or less exact terms what the learner should know and how he should be able to use this knowledge. With the Threshold Level—with its explicit statements about target skills and a list of functions, lists of general and specific notions, all with their respective exponents—statements of what students should be capable of will sound like this: they should be able to apologize; to request things; to express doubt, (dis)agreement, or (dis)satisfaction; to complain, or to write a letter of complaint; and so on. A pedagogical English notion list to be covered in a given syllabus might have as headings such categories as Requesting and Giving Information; Expressing Thought Processes; Expressing Opinions; Modifying People's Behavior; Expressing Personal Feelings and Interacting Socially (Dobson 1979). Then, each of these categories might contain a score or more of actual "notions" or themes. One could make up one's own lists, with graded complexity for different levels, forgetting, for the moment, about one single "threshold" level, for there are many ways of making, and slicing, a functional-notional pie.

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[1] J.L.M. Trim, Preface to *The Threshold Level* (van Ek 1975).

[2] **EDITOR'S NOTE: The "postillion-lightning" phrase refers, apparently, to the kinds of low-frequency words and sentences found in some grammars and phrase books.**

Wilkins (1977) has gone into these possibilities most fully, dividing notional categories into two main types: semantico-grammatical and communicative-functional; the former conveying such notions as time, quantity, space, and case, with the latter expressing the social purposes of utterances.

It seemed that these notions, or something similar, could be postulated for many languages, not only Indo-European. The significance of contrastive studies in language learning was thus recognized. However, Wilkins (1976) has also stated that notional syllabuses "as such do not exist," and that the potential of such syllabuses as a framework for TEFL/TESL courses "is obviously still largely unexplored." Furthermore, "it would be premature to suggest that we are already in a position to put forward a coherent and adequate account of the methods and techniques to be used with a notional syllabus." Also, significantly, he has stated that the language activities leading on from a notional-functional approach center around the *content* rather than the *form* of the target language (Wilkins 1976).

Implications for TEFL/TESL methodology

Wilkins's last two quoted points lead us on to the main burden of this article. If Wilkins, and all of us, were facing basically unmapped territory in 1976, have any insights or material emerged since? What are the implications of this approach to the methods and techniques we might use in the classroom? (Readers are reminded of, or referred to, the seminal essay by E.M. Anthony[3] on the intrinsic differences between approach, method, and technique.) Does this approach mean little more than the *content* of what we teach? Can we use any method per se: "Direct," "Indirect," "Grammar-Translation," "Behavioral," "Bilingual," "Audiolingual," "Natural," "Mim-Mem"—or any other label or trend that takes our fancy in teaching the content?

One trend, or pendulum swing, seems to be discernible: that is, the usefulness of dialogues as teaching text. What follows on the facing page is a chart suggesting possible ways of using the functional-notional approach in a typical scheme of work; and the judicious strategy-hunter may draw some useful methodological conclusions.

It will be noted that structures and functions may be introduced for the first time or reintroduced after having been taught earlier. This is one of the important factors and advantages of this approach: the cyclical or spiral technique. This means that topics may reoccur at grade-levels of difficulty or complexity, without losing any of the powerful motivation obtained by the particular socio-cultural situation. It will also be noted that the suggested "activities," on the right of our specimen chart, are an essential part of the EFL/ESL teacher's treatment of a functional-notional syllabus. The point is that these activities are in no way "limited" by the function concerned, though of course the function, and the situation chosen to illustrate it, will naturally suggest certain activities. Perhaps the most effective way of illustrating the selection process for appropriate activities is from the viewpoint of, say, a student teacher devising a lesson plan. Thus, a typical lesson plan for any function might contain the following steps:

1. Presentation and discussion of a dialogue.
2. Oral practice of the dialogue. Here the oral practice could be individual, choral, or entire class, depending on the particular class. The teacher must make decisions about suitability, etc., and be prepared to be adaptable. A useful if controversial precept for the EFL/ESL teacher is that flexibility is basically more important than preparation.
3. Questions and answers based on the dialogue. These questions can range from the usual Stage I question (whose answer is contained in the wording of the material) through Stage II (with the answer *implied* in the material) to Stage III questions (pertaining to the students' own lives). Other alternatives open to the flexible teacher are Yes-No questions, alternative questions (e.g., *Is the girl angry or pleased?*), and question-word questions, often less accurately dubbed *Wh-* questions (e.g., *How does the man feel? Who is the boy talking to? What is the boy holding?*).[4]

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[3] E.M. Anthony, "Approach, Method and Technique," *English Language Teaching, 17* (January 1963) pp. 63–67. Reprinted in *Teaching English as a Second Language: A Book of Readings*, ed. Harold B. Allen and Russell N. Campbell (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), pp. 4–8.

[4] For a discussion of the questioning techniques see Earl W. Stevick, "Technemes and the Rhythm of Class Activity," *Language Learning*, 7, 3, 1959, pp. 45–51. Reprinted in *Teaching English as a Second Language*, ed. Harold B. Allen and Russell N. Campbell (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1972), pp. 88–94.

Functional Unit	Situation	Grammar and Structures	Grammatical Units Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, etc.	Formulas, Idioms, and Sample Sentences	Activities (Methods and Techniques)
1a. Asking for information (direction)	Travel, etc.	Interrogatives Intonation Question techniques	*Please, excuse me* *Must, could, get, take, how, where, wonder* Names of places	*Could you tell me the way to . . . ?* *Excuse me, please . . .* *I beg your pardon . . .* *I wonder if you could tell me, etc.*	Aural comprehension Dialogues, prepared and open Choral speaking Tape Dictation Cloze tests
1b. Asking for information (6 months later)	Travel, etc.	Interrogatives Indirect questions Abbreviations Modal *must* Imperatives	*Sorry, but* *Would, could*	*Sorry, could you repeat that, do you think?* *I'm not quite sure . . .* *I don't understand . . .* *How would I . . . ?*	Expanding sentences from previous dialogues Role play, paired practice, etc.
2a. Giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing	Discussion, etc.	Statements Intonation	*Ask, think, know, consider, perhaps don't*	*If you ask me . . .* *I think that . . .* *You know . . .* *As I see it . . .* *I agree, but . . .* *Perhaps, but don't you think that . . . ?*	Dialogues, prepared and open Tape Paired practice Role playing, dicto-comp, group discussion
2b. Giving opinions, agreeing and disagreeing (4 months later)	Discussion, etc.	Reported speech Formal and informal registers Abbreviations	*Don't, wouldn't, I'd, that's*	*Honestly, wouldn't you say that . . . ?* *Don't you think/agree that . . . ?* *I'd just like to say that . . .* *Well, that 's true . . .* *You have a point there . . .*	Expanding sentences from previous dialogues Introduction of more complex statements and opinions Dicto-comp Any of the above Practice

4. Presentation and examination of the structure(s) contained in the dialogue. The teacher could use an infinite variety of techniques here, including visual/oral/drill presentation and dramatization. The rule or generalization underlying the structure(s) should not be ignored.

5. Oral recognition and practice activities of the above structure(s).

6. The transfer of oral to written activity. For instance, the dialogue itself, or parts of it, or the structural rule, or parts of the freer communication activities may be copied.

7. The final summary or evaluation of the lesson's purpose, i.e., What did we learn today?, and the assignment of a homework-type task, if applicable.

The "freer communication activities" of such a lesson are not specified exactly, the possibilities being too numerous. However, they might include role-playing, reporting and expanding dialogues, defining the style or variety of a given utterance, conversion or expansion-drill exercises on the structure(s), completing a dialogue when words or phrases are omitted, or paraphrasing, i.e., using alternative structures and dialogue. The possibilities are bounded only by the teacher's imagination, and the materials and aids available.

The teacher's art

One might sum up by stating that one can only give examples of *some* of the practical applications of this approach. There can never be a definitive choice or list of activities and techniques suitable for a given function. The activities chosen will depend on the class, its composition, the stage reached, and the teacher himself. Teaching is still more of an art than a science, despite the impact of linguistics on EFL/ESL. The functional-notional syllabus, then, contains little that is revolutionary for the methodologist. Rather it is a useful and meaningful peg on which to hang eclectic methods. The latest trend in TEFL/TESL is more of a reinforcement and consolidation than a change—as the best trends have always been—and this message, if conservative, should not be regarded as disappointing.[5]

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5. Course designers and publishers are now producing visually attractive textbooks with varying degrees of teacher autonomy, i.e., the possible activities implicit in the material may be spelled out or left to the individual teacher. An interesting comparison, for instance, might be made between the two following textbooks: Brian Abbs, Antela Ayton, and Ingrid Fairbairn, *Strategies* (London: Longman, 1975) (Beginners), and Leo Jones, *Functions of English* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1977) (Upper-Intermediate and Advanced). The "Teacher's Book" accompanying the former might be described as being so explicit and "helpful" as to relieve the teacher of any need for originality or spontaneity.

Exploiting Recorded Radio Programs for Teaching Conversational English

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While more and more people are talking about the construction of teaching materials, scarcely any attention has been given to the radio as a continuing source of listening material. Broadcasts in English, which can be heard everywhere, are very important in French-speaking developing countries, where there are few opportunities to meet people who speak English and where even printed matter and other sorts of ready-made visual aids may be rare.

In this article I will discuss the usefulness of the radio in teaching and learning English,[1] and I will present some techniques I have devised to teach conversational English from recorded interviews.

Our students are greatly interested in listening to radio programs.[2] This is partly because they are fascinated by machines that produce sounds and partly because they tend to have confidence in materials voiced by native speakers of English. Such materials have always been good models for imitation by language learners. That is why teachers who are nonnative speakers of English use professional tapes and records to supplement their lessons, and sometimes invite native speakers of English to speak to their classes.

However, neither native speakers nor professional tapes are available all the time. And available tapes do not always contain subjects appropriate to the needs and objectives of a particular group of learners. Radio programs, however, present continuously varied topics, and so are a source of reality, interest, and motivation in the classroom and at home. In fact, there are many ways in which a skillful teacher can exploit them for his classes.

By listening regularly and attentively to interviews on the radio a teacher can develop a list of recurring structures and expressions that are very useful for conversational English.[3] In analyzing recorded interviews on the radio, a teacher may discover some features of spoken language that are helpful in teaching conversation; for instance, hesitation phenomena, clichés, and formulaic phrases. He may thereby improve textbook dialogues by making them sound more natural and authentic.

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[1] In his article "Language Training outside the Classroom: An Experiment on the Radio" (see References at the end of this article), James W. Fox presents some advantages of the radio as a medium of language education. But he insists on special radio programs for teaching English to learners at home. My article, however, is based on my experiments in exploiting English radio programs in general for teaching English in class.

[2] We generally speak about students in advanced classes (the last two years of secondary school and students entering English departments in our university). My experiments have been based on these levels as well.

[3] Listeners in central Africa (e.g., Zaire) can tune in to these radio stations with good reception: South African Broadcasting Corporation (Talking Point, African Panorama, etc.), BBC, The Voice of America, The Voice of Germany, and others.

Nevertheless, the task of exploiting radio programs presents its own difficulties. Some broadcasts may not be very clear because of interference, and/or they may be presented at so fast a speed that learners find it difficult to follow them. We should encourage our students to overcome these difficulties by concentrating on the message as a whole rather than trying to understand the meaning of individual words.

In listening, learners should try to understand words in relation to other words. This can help them acquire meaningful patterns and expressions, which may prove useful even in listening to unclear broadcasts. In other words, a repertoire of expressions students have already heard and learned may help them mentally reconstruct inaudible expressions whenever there are distortions or passages are presented too fast. Even in everyday life we interpret speech in this way; we can't hear everything all the time. We often reconstruct the message partly from what we hear and partly from what we expected the speaker to say. There is certainly no danger, then, in letting our students listen to speech as it is spoken in everyday life. This practice gives them an idea of what they should strive to achieve. It also allows them to measure their own progress at regular periods, and to feel confident that they are on the right track to mastery of correct and authentic English.

Let us now explore how English can be taught from recorded radio programs. These views are based on experiments I have carried out in my classes. My lessons have focused on four major points that I have found amenable to experiments with recorded materials: *pronunciation practice*, *vocabulary learning*, *reading comprehension*, and *note-taking*.

Pronunciation practice

A teacher can exploit recorded radio programs to teach intonation and the achievement of fluency. He can explain every aspect of sounds as they occur in natural speech. Proficient though a nonnative speaker of English may be, he may not produce such varied examples of intonation as can be heard on recorded interviews. Therefore, learners who strive to achieve fluency and acquire good intonation should make it their duty to listen regularly to English-language broadcasts. They should not be discouraged from persisting in this practice even though they may not understand the broadcasts well at the beginning.

This habit may, in due course, have the same effect on the learner as does staying for a long time in an English-speaking country. It creates an environment in which English speech sounds penetrate the conscious as well as the subconscious mind. Some people claim that by simply listening to a language one may learn its pronunciation unconsciously—that is, without any effort. Indeed, this is especially so for someone who lives for a long time in a milieu where the language is spoken. But it may be equally true for someone who, after learning English for a few years, maintains a habit of listening regularly and with interest to radio broadcasts; he may learn the music of the language without being really conscious of doing so.

Below are some techniques that can be used to teach pronunciation from radio programs.

Repetition Exercises. If the cassette player has a "pause" device, this makes it easier for students to do repetition exercises. We can have the students listen to meaningful groups of words and repeat them in chorus every time we stop the cassette by pushing the "pause" button. By using the playback device we can have them repeat these words as many times as we wish. In this exercise, students do their best to imitate sounds as faithfully as possible, thereby practicing intonation, rhythm, and other characteristics of spoken language. Such repetitions are easier with lectures, news broadcasts, and deliberately enunciated talks than with interviews, plays, and spontaneous speeches, as these latter are characterized by speed, hesitations, and interruptions. Students enjoy doing this exercise, as they feel confident that they are practicing authentic speech sounds.

Phonetic Transcription. Sometimes the teacher may write out recorded passages in phonetic symbols.[4] While students listen to these passages, they may follow simultaneously their phonetic transcriptions written in advance on duplicated sheets or on the blackboard. This exercise can help students learn the pronunciation of weak forms, stress, and the distinction between similar sounds. It can also help them acquire the exact pronunciation of words and overcome other pronunciation problems.

Comparison of Different Accents. In listening to different accents of English, students begin to realize that these accents and different pronunciations of certain words don't constitute any major obstacle to understanding any type of English. Students may therefore listen to various interviews recorded on different radio stations. This can help them accept other people's accents and hear all sorts of spoken English, although what they should aim at is near-native pronunciation (either British or American accent).

Teaching vocabulary

Some textbooks confine vocabulary to words relating to the classroom. All too often this prevents the students from learning truly communicative language. Radio talks and interviews contain rich background material, and they deal with various topics. They therefore provide a good opportunity for increasing the students' vocabulary.

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[4] International Phonetics Association (IPA) symbols (cf. Daniel Jones's *Pronouncing Dictionary*).

a. After listening to a news program in a language he knows well,[5] a student may tune in to another station that is broadcasting the same news items in English. In making an effort to understand the same news—but in English this time—the student may learn many new English words. The teacher can do a similar thing: after recording the same news items in French and in English, he can let his students listen alternately to the two versions. Afterwards he can conduct a discussion in English in which new words and expressions are used.

b. After having students listen to a recorded passage, the teacher can, by asking questions, check to see whether they have gotten a general idea of what they have just heard. The teacher's role consists of leading the students gradually to a comprehension of the passage by explaining new words and structures. He should therefore write these words on the blackboard. He can afterwards ask some questions that will help the students use the new words in their own sentences.

c. The teacher can prepare students in advance for the interview they are going to listen to. He can begin by giving an explanation of the passage and the new words used in it. Then he can let them listen to it as many times as he wishes. Afterwards he can ask some questions to see whether the students have understood the passage and have learned the new words. These questions should be prepared in advance in such a way that the class is engaged in interesting and motivating discussions on definite topics.

d. A group of students may be asked to dramatize certain interviews according to the models they have heard and learned in class. The teacher should give them words and structures that he would like them to use, as in model interviews. While they perform these little scenes he should make a note of the expressions that are not used correctly. (It is better to wait until the students have finished instead of interrupting them while they speak.) Here are some examples of interviews that can be practiced: After listening to such interviews as "A director of a zoo being interviewed by a tourist" or "Dr. X answering questions about drug education," students can dramatize such topics as "Mr. Y being interviewed by a manager for a job," "Mr. Z giving his opinions about cities he has visited," etc. Indeed, this is a good opportunity to hear students use ordinary clichés, formulaic phrases, expressions of hesitation, agreement, and all sorts of stereotyped expressions necessary for fluency and natural speech.[6]

Reading comprehension

After transcribing a recorded radio program, you may conduct a reading lesson by following these steps:

1. Let the students listen to the broadcast attentively.
2. Let them listen to the broadcast while they read it silently.
3. Give a brief account of the broadcast and explain difficult words.
4. Ask the students some comprehension questions.
5. Rewind the cassette and let them listen to it again while they read the printed broadcast silently.
6. Ask them to summarize in their own words what they have been reading and listening to.
7. Ask some individual students to read aloud, and then ask the class to criticize the reading, with special attention to pronunciation, fluency, and intonation.

The purpose of this exercise is to help students read fluently and with good pronunciation and intonation; to help them understand what they read; to help them recognize the importance of meaningful patterns; and to enlarge their vocabulary. I do not mean to suggest that students must read like speakers on the radio, nor as if they were broadcasting news. My aim is simply to provide them with some model readings by English-speaking people.

Note-taking

At the high-school level, students are often required to take notes of lectures, conferences, and courses. More often than not they don't know how to jot down the essential part of what they hear. To help them overcome this difficulty, a series of comprehension exercises can be developed in which students are asked to write a summary of what they hear and to report on it orally. The ultimate aim of these note-taking exercises is to determine whether students can hear correctly what is being said and whether they can report on it orally and accurately.

Some recorded radio programs may be very helpful for this purpose. While the cassette is being played, students should concentrate on what is being said and take down as many notes as possible to help them report on what they have heard.

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[5] French in the case of Zairean students.

[6] Cf. my article "Teaching English and Stereotyped Expressions" (see References).

A New Way to Look at (and Explain!) Language Problems

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I am writing this article for language teachers who are curious about language—about the "why" of language—and who would like to be better able to explain difficult aspects of English to their students. I have found that the terms and concepts that will be presented here are simple enough to be understood and manipulated by most literate adult students. (Literate people usually take a somewhat analytical approach to language.) Although most of us have come to recognize that for students to be able to function well in a new language, they need not be highly sophisticated in their knowledge of grammar rules, I feel that students' desire to pull language apart and to be able to formulate rules, look for regularities, and understand why language functions as it does ought not to be ignored.

We want to encourage the curiosity and analytical capacities of our students, so that they can become more independent as language learners. The thoughts that follow are designed to help teachers show students how to attack language problems. It is a tribute to the elegance of the model of language that is being presented here—case grammar—that it explains many aspects of language: vocabulary differences, grammar problems (both syntax and morphology), questions of style, and even questions of punctuation.[1] It does so, moreover, using only a few new concepts and terms over and over again.

The essentials of case grammar

Essentially this model asks us to look at language in the following way: Imagine the sentence as a play.[2] There are the actors, the plot, and the stage setting. The actors are the nouns. The plot is the verb, which tells the relationship between the nouns. Everything else—tense and time, place, manner, etc.—is the stage setting. It is obvious that the plot and the actors (the nouns and the verb) are the important part of the sentence. They are called the PROPOSITION—the important information being conveyed.

This article originally appeared, in a slightly different form, in *CTJ Journal*, a publication of the Casa Thomas Jefferson, Brasilia. Reprinted with permission.

[1] This model is called Case Grammar by most linguists. The basic concepts are associated with theoretical linguists Charles Fillmore, Wallace Chafe, and John Anderson (see bibliography). These days, theoretical linguists are searching for universals in language—what is common to all languages. I feel it is a tribute to *this* model that its concepts are evidently quite valid in this regard, as they are easily understood and applied by speakers of the most varied languages. This is not to claim that the model is necessarily saying something "true," but that it is *highly* valuable in allowing us to identify regularities within and between languages.

[2] This image was first used by Robert E. Longacre (*Grammar Discovery Procedures*. The Hague: Mouton, 1964.)

The rest is called the MODALITY. There may indeed be nouns in the modality (*in the kitchen, after the luncheon, in the manner of a sly fox*), but these are not the nouns that are related by the verb. We say that propositional nouns are "demanded" by the verb. A verb "demands" one, two, or three nouns. The verb *sneeze*, for example, is associated with only one noun—the person who sneezed. Likewise, *to fall down, to be pretty* (*to be* plus a complement is considered a verb, or verbal, in this model), *to feel tired, to be born* are also one-noun verbs.

Once we add a second and a third noun to the proposition, we have a verbal which expresses some kind of relationship between or among the nouns.

Noun roles

Before looking at examples of two- and three-noun verbs, let us consider the kinds of roles a noun can have. The case-grammar model suggests that we can describe the roles of all propositional nouns by using only five terms: (*a*) AGENT—the voluntary causer of its own action or of a change of state in itself or another noun; (*b*) EXPERIENCER—the animate experiencer of a cognitive or emotional stimulus; (*c*) BENEFACTIVE—possessor, gainer, or loser of something; (*d*) LOCATION—this is not the modality location (*Gino baked a cake in the kitchen*) but rather a location noun demanded by the verb, as in *He put the book on the table* or *She went to Chicago*, where the sentence would be incomplete if the location were not included; (*e*) This last role is a bit complicated. Some linguists call it the "wastebasket" role, because anything left over is thrown into this category. For the moment, let us call it"X". The feature that all X's have in common is that they represent a noun about which we are telling or predicating something. A sentence tells us either that something happened to X (it changed its state) or that we are describing X in some way. Some writers call it the "theme" of the sentence, viewing it as the main noun of each sentence. I have identified four types of X: (1) AFFECTED X—*The elephant crushed the peanut*. (The elephant changed the state of the unfortunate peanut.) (2) EFFECTED X—*Gino made a cake*. (The cake was created.); (3) X CAUSE—Love Story *made me sad*. (The non-voluntary cause of an experience.); (4) X TOPIC—*The Casa Thomas Jefferson is a magnificent institution*. (We are predicating something about the Casa Thomas Jefferson.)

Now, given these five noun roles, let us consider the roles of nouns in the following sentences. But first a warning: we are *not* here talking about the *grammatical* roles of the nouns. These five roles are only *semantic*—they tell us something about the real-world *meaning* of the sentence. A noun in any one of these semantic roles, as you will see from the examples, may take *any grammatical role* in the sentence. And a noun in any *grammatical role* may have any of the five semantic roles.

1. John forgot about the wine.
2. Ted loves Alice.
3. Yoshio went to Brazil last week.
4. Gino Leoni made spaghetti sauce yesterday.
5. Tom has a new car.
6. Elizabeth lost her grade cards!
7. The box contains three kittens.
8. The crown is on his head.
9. Tony gave Susan a ring.
10. David received the secret code from his partner.

Let's talk about the semantic (meaningful) role of the *grammatical subject only* of each sentence, in order to focus on the fact that, although the grammatical role may be the same, the meaning may be different.[3] This is more than just an interesting exercise. Once these concepts are understood they can help explain many kinds of language problems.

In sentence 1, John is an EXPERIENCER of a cognitive stimulus. Ted, in sentence 2, is the EXPERIENCER of an emotional stimulus. In 3, Toshio is an AGENT—he caused himself to be in Brazil. (Unless he is dead—in which case he is merely an AFFECTED X—someone shipped his body!) Gino, in sentence 4, is also an AGENT—causing something to come into existence. In sentence 5, the subject is neither an AGENT (not voluntarily causing anything) nor an EXPERIENCER (of a cognitive or emotional stimulus). He is the possessor of something—the BENEFACTIVE role. The subject of sentence 6 is also a BENEFACTIVE—in this case the loser rather than the gainer or possessor of something. In sentence 7, the subject is—here's a surprise—the LOCATION. It tells where the kittens are. The subject of sentence 8 is an X TOPIC—we are predicating something about (in this case, telling the location of) the crown. The verbs of sentences 9 and 10 are three-noun verbs. That is, all three noun roles are demanded by the verb. Seldom is a sentence with a three-noun verb complete if all three nouns are not there; however, it is understood even where one of the nouns is omitted. Tony, in sentence 9, is an AGENT—the causer of the fact that Susan now has a ring. David, in sentence 10, on the other hand, is the BENEFACTIVE.

Now let us look at what some of these new terms can help us do.

VOCABULARY

First, we can help students distinguish a number of verbs solely on the basis of whether or not they involve an AGENT. Let us consider two sets of verbs that students often have difficulty with: *raise/grow up* and *look at/see*. The difference in both sets, and indeed in many more, is that the first verb in each pair is an agent-verb. That is, it demands an AGENT. In fact, it can be said that the first is the voluntary causer of the second. A person who raises a child causes her to grow up. A person who looks at something causes himself to see. Many troublesome verb pairs can be distinguished for students on this basis.

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[3] I have listed the roles of the other nouns in an appendix at the end of the article.

"Be," "become," and "cause-to-become" verbs

Now, if we take the idea of "cause" mentioned above and expand our set of terms to include BE, BECOME (meaning "come to 'be' "), and CAUSE TO BECOME, we can find another way to distinguish among verbs. Consider the mistake that many students make by saying "I just knew it yesterday," when a native speaker of English would say "I just heard about it" or "I just learned (or found out) about it." This suggests that in many other languages the verb *know* can be used not only to suggest the BE idea (that is, to be in a cognitive state of knowledge), but also to "COME TO know" ("come to be in a state of knowledge"), and also to "CAUSE oneself to come to be in a state of knowledge." Often, it is merely by changing the form of the verb (*sabia* versus *soube* in Portuguese, for example) that the difference is expressed. However, in English, totally different verbs or verb phrases are needed. This difference is efficiently demonstrated by use of the three concepts, BE, BECOME, and CAUSE TO BECOME.

Now, how about *die* and *dead*, another problem common to many English-language learners. *Dead* describes a state (a BE verb), while *die* suggests the process of BECOMING dead. To complete the paradigm—and to help expand vocabulary (this is fun!)—what would be the CAUSE TO BECOME form? Either *murder* or *kill*, on the one hand, or *commit suicide* or *kill oneself*, on the other (i.e., cause another to become dead, or cause oneself to become dead).

A useful vocabulary-expanding and general language-expanding exercise, then, is to take a number of state verbs and adjectives (*to be* plus adjective is considered a state verbal) and have the students find the BECOME and CAUSE TO BECOME forms that correspond. For example, for the adjective *black* there is the BECOME form *blacken* (*The sky blackened quickly*) and the CAUSE TO BECOME form (*He blackened the shoes again*). Notice, however, that we cannot do the same thing with *blue*. The next step, then, is to look for alternative ways of expressing various forms of the paradigm if the English vocabulary does not provide a verb. Thus, the students learn to say *He painted it blue*, *It became blue*, or *It turned blue*.

The purpose of practicing a bit with these concepts, then, is threefold. In addition to directly increasing the student's vocabulary, these concepts teach him to look at language systematically and to ask himself the question "Is there a way of saying 'cause someone to know'?" And further, if a student finds that, for example, there is no word that means "cause someone to sneeze," he will have learned on a systematic basis what phrases to consider as alternatives.

Noun-incorporation verbs

Along the lines of helping a student ask the right questions, let us consider the case of the student who says "He went onto his knees" instead of "He knelt," or "He took the peel off the orange" instead of "He peeled the orange." Again, we want the student to ask himself "Is there a word that expresses the meaning of this phrase? This time, however, it is not a problem of BE–BECOME–CAUSE TO BECOME. This is, rather, a question of "putting a noun inside the verb," or noun-incorporation. That is, *kneel* has the LOCATION NOUN (*knees*) inside it, and *peel* has the AFFECTED X (*peel*) inside it. Other examples are *to butter* (to put butter on)—AFFECTED X incorporated; *to shelve*—LOCATION incorporation; and *to cup* (one's hands)—EFFECTED X incorporation—(make a cup with one's hands). There is also the fascinating question of when one would choose *not* to use the verb, but to use the phrase, which gets into questions of style. This is also important, but I will not treat it here.

Noun-incorporation verbs are fun to practice. Students love to discover all the different kinds of nouns that can be incorporated and to compare whether or not the same ones can be incorporated in their own language. Example: Can you do a word-for-word translation of "skin the beast" in Portuguese? How about "Don't baby him"?

PUNCTUATION

Let us take a brief interlude between vocabulary and grammar and look at punctuation. Consider these two sentences: (1) *Inside the cage, the bird was chirping happily*. (2) *Into the cage the bird flew*. Notice that there is a comma in the first sentence, but none in the second. Why? This brings us back to the two kinds of LOCATION nouns, one seen as stage-setting only (part of the MODALITY), and one demanded by the verb (part of the PROPOSITION). Since the modality LOCATION (see the first sentence) is not considered as integral to the sentence, we pause more in our speech when placing it first, and we mark this pause—this weaker relationship to the rest of the sentence—with a comma. The second sentence, although it appears to be grammatically exactly the same, contains a PROPOSITIONAL LOCATION, one demanded by the verb *to fly*, more closely related to the rest of the sentence, and thus not separated by a pause or a comma.

To get a bit esoteric for a moment, let us go even further and talk a bit about style. There is a stylistic variation of *Into the cage the bird flew* (which is already a stylistic variation of the normal word order). This variation is *Into the cage flew the bird*. Native speakers probably feel that this is the better word order, once we have put the location first. Why? Why do we wish to reverse the normal subject-verb order? Well, it seems that, having taken one of the demanded nouns out of normal word order, we are somehow compelled to mark that unorthodoxy by further rearranging the other sentence elements. This variation is necessary and attractive to us only if the initial LOCATION phrase is a PROPOSITIONAL location, and not a MODALITY one. We evidently feel that a more *basic* rule has been violated. The point is that we must often look beyond grammar to meaning in order to explain certain problems, or we will not find the answer—for *The bird flew into the cage* and *The bird chirped happily inside the cage* could not, grammatically, be more similar.[4] Yet obviously there is a semantic difference which has linguistic consequences.

GRAMMAR

Now we can consider how these semantic concepts help us deal with grammar problems. First, some syntax: There is a gerund structure that consists of *the* + gerund + *of* + noun. For example: *The killing of bears is forbidden in this area*. We find, however, that not all gerund phrases lend themselves to this structure. We cannot say **The hearing of music is relaxing* or **The having of a lot of money is convenient*.[5] Notice, now, that if we restrict ourselves to grammatical considerations, we will have a difficult time figuring out why these latter two sentences are unacceptable. *Killing bears, having a lot of money,* and *hearing music* all look alike grammatically, as do the sentences from which we can ultimately derive these gerunds: *Someone kills bears, Someone hears music, Someone has a lot of money*. Only if we resort to semantics can we find an answer: it seems that if the original subject (in this case, let us say *someone*) is an EXPERIENCER or a BENEFACTIVE, rather than an AGENT, this "the–of" expression is not acceptable.[6] *Hear* and *have* are EXPERIENCER and BENEFACTIVE verbs, and thus are not candidates for the "the–of" gerund forms. Notice that there is no way to express this rule in purely grammatical terms.

Another problem involves an infinitive construction. Consider the following sentences:

a. The teacher told the students when to go.

b. The teacher announced when to go.

c. The teacher found out when to go.

It seems that in many languages, this construction is interpreted differently than in English. Several people have told me that this construction in their languages would always be interpreted as meaning that the teacher was going. In other words, the interpretation is based on a grammatical consideration—the subject of the main sentence is also the AGENT of the infinitive. However, native speakers of English know that only in sentence *c* is the teacher the AGENT of *go*. (In *b*, the teacher may or may not go, but we know the students are going.) How does the English speaker know this? Or, to say it better, since the learner cannot gain the intuitive knowledge of the native speaker: what is the regularity here? Obviously, again, it cannot be based on grammar alone, for the grammatical structures of sentences *b* and *c* are the same: subject, verb, infinitive phrase. The answer lies in the roles of the nouns. It is always the EXPERIENCER of the main sentence that is the AGENT of the infinitive. In sentence *a*, the students are the (cognitive) EXPERIENCER. In sentence *b*, the EXPERIENCER is omitted but understood. In sentence *c*, it is the teacher who is the EXPERIENCER, and consequently the agent of *to go*. Let me emphasize once more that we turned to semantics, the *meaning* of the sentence elements, for the answer, because a purely grammatical analysis did not reveal the differences in the sentences that could answer our questions.

Finally, let us consider one example of morphology (word formation): the classic *interesting/interested* problem. Once the students have mastered the terms we have already introduced, this is no problem at all. The suffix *-ing* signals the X CAUSE (of an experience), and *-ed* signals the EXPERIENCER. Period.

CONCLUSION

What I hope to have shown here is that the few concepts of this semantically based language model are extremely useful tools by which students can be led to understand more about English and to ask intelligent questions about it. My own experience has been that these terms can be introduced gradually, as necessary, and that they will then be found useful again and again until the students become thoroughly familiar with them. If you choose to use this model, you will find that you continually find new applications for it. I hope that you and your students have as much fun with it as I have had.

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[4] EDITOR'S NOTE: Some grammarians might take issue with this statement according to their definition of "grammatically." Nevertheless, the point the author is making seems clear enough.

[5] An asterisk before a sentence means that the sentence is not acceptable to a native speaker.

[6] I have not researched this as thoroughly as I would like. It may be that the prohibition applies only to "state" BENEFACTIVE and EXPERIENCER verbs, and not those that express CAUSE TO BECOME and BECOME (e.g., *have* is a state, but *receive* is a BECOME verb). In any case, it can be seen that the question has to be attacked semantically, not syntactically.

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APPENDIX

The other noun roles in sentences 1–10:

1. *Wine* is X CAUSE (of cognitive experience).
2. *Alice* is X CAUSE (of emotional experience).
3. *Brazil* is LOCATION.
4. *Spaghetti sauce* is EFFECTED X.
5. *New car* is X TOPIC.[7]
6. *Grade cards* is AFFECTED X.
7. *Three kittens* is X TOPIC.
8. *Head* is LOCATION.
9. *Susan* is BENEFACTIVE. *Ring* is AFFECTED X.
10. *Secret code* is AFFECTED X. *Partner* is AGENT.

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[7] You may wonder why the direct object of *have* (sentence 5) is X TOPIC, while the direct object of *lose* is AFFECTED X. That is because *to lose* something can be seen as a change of state (i.e., location) of the item, while *to have* something is not a process—it simply predicates the state of ownership at the time. See also *receive*, where the possession was transferred and therefore the item is interpreted as AFFECTED X. You may disagree with some of these decisions. That does not invalidate the model. One needs simply to be consistent in how one interprets the roles.

□

Some Suggestions continued from page 16

with a community spirit geared towards learning to communicate in the language will evolve.

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Exploiting Recorded Radio continued from page 23

Conclusion

In conclusion, I can say that as long as practice on speech sounds is given priority in language-learning situations, materials containing native speakers' voices should be exploited as much as possible, and schools should be equipped with such materials. One of the teacher's duties, therefore, should be to listen regularly to the radio in order to record any broadcast that would seem useful for his classes. In spite of some difficulties, a skillful teacher will always find ways to adapt recorded radio programs to his students' level. He should record on cassettes different topics that relate to lessons to be taught. These cassettes should be labeled according to the topics they deal with, and kept on a special shelf for use each time they are needed. Then, when the teacher finds that the lesson he must teach relates to a topic recorded on a cassette, he should avail himself of this opportunity to use that cassette to supplement the lesson in the book with some interesting outside material.

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CORRECTION

The references for Victor Carlson's article on the use of drama in the classroom were inadvertently left out of the previous issue. We hereby print them, with apologies to Mr. Carlson.

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Games for the Classroom and the English-speaking Club

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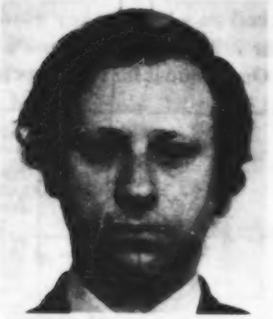

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Whether for the classroom or the English-speaking club, the teacher must plan activities that lead the students to greater proficiency in English. Learning a foreign language is a complex task that should not be left to chance: good classes are the result of careful planning. Without adequate preparation, even the advanced conversation class, typically the most unstructured type of class, will fall flat on its face.

This article presents a selection of games that, with a little planning, will help to create dynamic, motivating classes. Most of these games require some preclass preparation on the part of the teacher in terms of materials (simple picture cards, charts, handouts, etc.) and in terms of class readiness (the students' ability to handle certain lexical and grammatical structures). Since most of these activities are designed to give practice in the vocabulary and structures that the students are already familiar with, the teacher should review these with the class before beginning any game in which they are to be used.

Those of you who have experimented with language games as a teaching device will be, I am sure, as enthusiastic about their use as I am. Unfortunately, many teachers still feel that games should be used only for a short time, to give the class a break from the monotony of drilling, and some teachers consider games a merely frivolous activity. What is frequently overlooked is that real learning takes place when the students, in a relaxed atmosphere, participate in activities that require them to use what they have been drilled on. Classes should be planned so that there is a minimum of formal drilling and a maximum of activities that make the students forget that they are in a classroom.

The games that follow have been used successfully with students at the University of Amazonas and at the Brazilian-American Cultural Institute. As you read about them, do not be too hasty to conclude that these activities are not suitable for adults. There is a child hidden in every one of us, and bringing out this child undoubtedly facilitates the learning of a foreign language. One of the best classes I ever gave was a dialogue based on Rip Van Winkle in which one of my adult students spontaneously decided to invent a part for Rip's dog. It added a great deal to the class and showed me that, given the right situation, the child in us can be used for enjoyable, productive teaching.

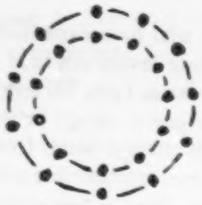
Get-acquainted activities

As the name suggests, get-acquainted exercises are well suited for situations in which the members of the group do not know each other. They are therefore particularly useful for the first meeting of the class, which, instead of being wasted, as it often is, can thus be converted into a productive communication activity in which the students get to know their classmates.

All of these exercises stimulate interaction among the students, thereby creating a nonthreatening environment conducive to language learning. As the students become more comfortable with each other and with the teacher, they begin to feel that they are part of a group. As a result, they lose their fear of making mistakes and appearing foolish in front of their classmates. Only when the students begin to lose their inhibitions have they really taken the first step towards learning English.

Note that these activities are not limited to a situation in which the students do not know each other; they are excellent communication exercises that can be used productively any time during the course.

Circle Chat. The students form two concentric circles as follows, with the students in the inner circle facing those in the outer circle:



Each student introduces himself to the person directly in front of him; then the teacher announces a topic that the students must discuss with their partners. After about two minutes, the teacher gives a signal for the class to stop (because of the noise, a bell or whistle is helpful), and the students in the outer circle remain stationary, while those in the inner circle move a few steps to the left to find new partners. The students introduce themselves and the teacher presents a new topic for discussion. Of course, the topics should be prepared in advance according to the age and interests of the students. The following are some of the topics that we have used with our students at the University of Amazonas.

1. Your family.
2. Cities and countries you have visited.
3. What is happiness?
4. The qualities of a good spouse.
5. The five worst problems facing the world today.
6. Your plans for the future.
7. What will the world be like in the year 2000?
8. You are from Mars and have just arrived on Earth. Comment on your impressions.
9. If you could be a famous person, who would you be and why?
10. Is there life on other planets?

On the first day of class, with beginning students, I conduct this activity in their native language, my objective being to break the ice and initiate a feeling of group spirit through student interaction. With advanced students the exercise would, naturally, be performed in English.

Inquisition. While the formation and movements of the students are the same as in Circle Chat, the objective of Inquisition is for each student to find out as much as possible about his partner. After a short time, the teacher stops the conversations and quizzes two or three students about their partners. Then the students in the inner circle rotate a few steps to the left to begin a new interview with new partners. When I do this exercise with beginning students, I drill the questions with the class beforehand, using a chart on which the key words are written. During the game itself, the students use a handout with the key words. One handout for beginners looks like this:

1. What's — complete name?
2. What's — favorite *song* / *book* / *restaurant* / *sport* / *movie* ?
3. What color — *house* / *dog* / *car* ?
4. What — like — do — weekends?
5. Where — born?
6. Where — live?
7. Who's — — favorite *actress* / *actor* / *singer* ?
8. How — feeling today?
9. How many brothers and sisters — have?

Secret Agent's Orders. Each student is given a card containing a number that he is told to look at but not show to anyone else. Then the students are given the following handout. Note that it consists of orders, each of which requires interaction between two or more students.

Dear Secret Agent,

We are working on a top secret case. Your assignment is to obtain all the information requested on this paper. Carry out all the instructions carefully. The success of the mission depends on you.

Your Chief,
Agent 001

1. Find out the following information:
    - *a*. Where does No. _________ live?
    - *b*. What is No. _________'s favorite dish?
    - *c*. What is No. _________'s favorite sport?
    - *d*. What is No. _________'s favorite book?
    - *e*. What kind of music does No. _________ prefer?
    - *f*. Does No. _________ believe in ghosts?
    - *g*. Does No. _________ believe in astrology?
    - *h*. Does No. _________ believe in life on other planets?
    - *i*. What would No. _________ do if he had $1,000,000?
2. Find No. _________ and, together, draw a picture of life in the year 2000.
3. Sing a song with No. _________.
4. Write a letter to No. _________ and ask No. _________ to deliver it.
5. Make a list with No. _________ of the five people (living or dead) who have had the greatest influence on mankind.
6. Tell a joke to No. _________.

Next, the students fill in the blanks on their papers with numbers in random order—that is, out of normal sequence. Thus, one student might fill in his paper as follows: 8, 1, 15, 9, 5, etc. Of course, no student should use his own number, nor should he use any number greater than the number of students who will be participating in the game. Finally, the students pin their numbers on their shirts, stand up, and proceed to follow the orders, writing down all the information requested.

It would probably be wise for the teacher to explain that the objective of the activity is communication and that it is not a race to see who finishes first. Also note that we put the game in a spy setting to create more interest.

Matching games

These exercises, like the get-acquainted activities, are designed to produce a maximum of student participation and interaction. Since the students will need ample space to move about, it is best to arrange the chairs in a formation that leaves the center of the room clear; for example, a horseshoe or semicircle.

Every student is given a cue card. Then, all the students stand up, and each student tries to locate, from among all his classmates, the one student who has the card with the information matching or completing that of his own card. Of course, the only form of communication is the spoken language; the students should not show their cards during the game but rather should use them as a cue for their responses. (Unless you make this clear to the students, they will tend to give an oral response and then show their cards as if to confirm what they said.)

These exercises have three important advantages for classroom use:

1. They stimulate social interaction and thereby lessen inhibitions.
2. They permit all of the students to participate simultaneously, thus increasing the students' speaking time.
3. They provide controlled practice of specific grammatical structures and lexical items, but without the boredom generated by many of the more mechanical drills.

States to Capitals. The class is divided into two groups. Each student in the first group receives a card with the name of a state; each student in the second group, a card with the name of a capital city. The students stand up and look for their partners, asking *Where are you from*? and answering *I'm from*. . . . When a match has been made, the two students sit down and wait for the other students to finish. If all the students are from the same country, their country's states and capital cities should be used. If the students are from various countries, the matching should be between countries and capital cities.

Questions to Answers. The students are divided into two groups. Each student in the first group receives a question card, while each student in the second group receives an answer card. The students must find their partners by matching the questions and answers. For each question there must be only one possible answer, but note in the example below that the questions and answers are formulated in such a manner that the students are forced to select the correct response from among several similar but distinctly different alternatives. Thus, in each exchange the student will have to mentally process what the other student has said and then determine if the information matches that of his own card. This exercise affords the students ample practice in making important linguistic discriminations. In the following set of questions and answers, for instance, at the phonemic level the students must distinguish between the minimal pairs /hiy/ and /ʃiy/; at the semantic level, between *who*, *what*, *where*, *how*, and *how many;* and at the syntactic level, between statements and questions.

1. Who are you going with?	I'm going with Bob.
2. What are you doing?	I'm studying.
3. Where are you?	I'm in the classroom.
4. How are you?	I'm fine, thanks.
5. How old are you?	I'm eighteen.
6. Who's that man?	He's Mr. Jones.
7. What's Bill doing?	He's reading
8. Where's Tom?	He's at the bank.
9. How's Jack?	He's fine.
10. How old is John?	He's twenty.
11. Who's that woman?	She's Mrs. Smith.
12. What's Mary doing?	She's swimming
13. Where's Judy?	She's at the library.
14. How's Sandy?	She's better.
15. How old is Nancy?	She's fifteen.

Games based on the combination of incongruous ideas

The juxtaposition of incongruous ideas often produces a humorous situation. And humor, when properly used, helps to create the kind of relaxed, friendly atmosphere that is necessary for learning to take place. Exercises based on incongruity will have positive results in terms of both speech production and listening comprehension. The students will feel less inhibited about speaking, knowing that the class will not laugh at *them*, but rather at what they say. Likewise, the students will be motivated to pay closer attention in order to hear what is being said.

Silly Answers. The students are told to take out a piece of paper and tear it in half. On one slip of paper they write a question, and on the other, the answer to their question. After all the questions have been collected in one pile and the answers in another, the teacher calls two students to the front of the class. One student selects and reads a question, and the other selects and reads an answer. As can be imagined, some of the combinations will be quite comical.

Confessions. The students are divided into three groups, and each group is given as many slips of paper as there are students in the class. The first group writes the name of a different famous person on every slip of paper. The second group writes places or situations; for example, *at home, in Baghdad, on top of the Statue of Liberty*. The third group writes, on their papers, what the students are supposed to be doing; for example, *dancing, eating a hamburger, baking a cake*. The slips are then distributed to the members of the class, and each student, in turn, stands up and reads his "confession." Thus, a student might announce, "*I'm Joe Smith. I'm with Albert Einstein in a swimming pool, cooking dinner*."

Crazy Stories. The teacher selects a well-known children's story and copies it onto a sheet of paper, leaving ample space between the sentences. The story is then cut into strips, each one containing a maximum of two sentences. The slips of paper are mixed and distributed to the students, who in turn read their sentences. Naturally, a nonsensical but amusing story will result. Before conducting this activity, the teacher might read the story to the class in its correct form. This would refresh the memory of those who are familiar with the story, and would provide a contextual orientation for those who are not.

Oral guessing games

Oral guessing games provide the students with much-needed practice in formulating questions, an essential skill that does not always receive sufficient attention. Language classes are often inadvertently structured so that most of the student speaking time is spent answering questions put forth by the teacher or the textbook: as a result, the students often have difficulty in forming their own questions.

Where Is It? A small object, such as a piece of chalk, is selected, and a student is asked to leave the room while it is being hidden. The student then returns and tries to discover its location by asking the class yes / no questions, using the following prepositions of spatial relationship:

in front of (me)
in back of (me)
near (me)
far from (me)
on (my) right
on (my) left
in
on
under
between

The student moves around, asking questions such as *Is it in front of me? Is it on my right?* from different positions in the room, until, by the process of elimination, he discovers the location of the object. Since there can be some differences in opinion as to exactly what is *in front of, near, far from,* etc., the class is permitted a third response, *not exactly*. The first time, the class should hide the object for the teacher to find; in this way, the teacher serves as a model for the students.

What Is It? Every student has pinned on the back of his shirt a card on which is written the name of an object. The students stand up, and each student tries to discover what is on his card by walking around the room and asking his classmates questions that can be answered by *yes* or *no*. For example, *Is it made of metal? Is it small? Is it found in a house?* To ensure a maximum of student interaction, the students are permitted to ask only one question of each of their classmates. When a student discovers what his object is, he removes his card and continues to walk around the room and answer the questions of the other students.

Predicaments. One of the students leaves the room while the rest of the class chooses a predicament, such as *You locked your keys in your car.* The student returns and tries to discover what his predicament is. He asks various members of the class what they would do, and each one must give an answer that is appropriate but does not give away the secret. The teacher should have some predicaments in mind in case the students have trouble thinking of one. Here are some suggestions:

1. You finish eating dinner in an expensive restaurant and discover that you didn't bring your wallet.
2. It's Sunday morning. You wake up and remember that it's your wife's birthday. Of course, there are no stores open on Sunday.
3. You borrow a friend's car and dent the fender.
4. You are trying to open the door of a car that looks exactly like yours and realize that you have the wrong car just as the owner appears.
5. You discover that you've taken the wrong train.

Games of observation and memory

Games of observation and memory can be used for interesting and effective vocabulary practice.

Kim's Game. About twenty different objects are placed on the desk and covered with a cloth. The cloth is removed and the students slowly walk by. Then the objects are covered again, and the students, either individually or in teams, make a list of everything on the desk. One point is scored for every object correctly listed, and two points are deducted for any item on the list that is not on the desk. When played in teams, more objects are used and each team makes a single list.

Picture Observation. This is essentially the same as Kim's Game except that pictures cut out from magazines and pasted on a large sheet of poster board are used instead of real objects. It is advisable to use many individually cut out pictures, each one counting as a separate item, rather than one big picture containing many items. Thus, the picture of a man would count as a single item, and no points would be given for his hat, shoes, socks, tie, etc.

Writing games

The following games can be used effectively as either individual or team competitions.

Jumbled Words. Each student or team is given a list of words within a specific category, such as *fruits, transportation, colors, professions,* etc. But the letters in each word are jumbled so as to make the original words somewhat difficult to recognize. The object of the game is to correctly rewrite the jumbled words, the winner being the student or team with the most correct words within the allotted time. Try your hand with the following jumbled words from the category *clothing*. The answers are given below.

1. OSEHS
2. FCRAS
3. SLOBUE
4. STNPA
5. TACNOIRA
6. SEDRS
7. SSSURNEEDP
8. TACO
9. GTCNSOIK
10. NAJES
11. NGNIWOTHG
12. WRSTAEE
13. SVTE
14. MJSAAPA
15. TCEJKA
16. RSTRSUOE
17. KLCASS
18. TRISK
19. TVRECAOO
20. SOOBT

Answers: (1) shoes (2) scarf (3) blouse (4) pants (5) raincoat (6) dress (7) suspenders (8) coat (9) stocking (10) jeans (11) nightgown (12) sweater (13) vest (14) pajamas (15) jacket (16) trousers (17) slacks (18) skirt (19) overcoat (20) boots.

Word Endings. The teacher writes on the board about twenty word endings, which the students must form into words, one for each ending. The student or team that completes the most words within the given time is the winner. See how you do at forming words with the following endings. Remember: no proper nouns are acceptable. One possible response for each ending is given below.

1. ase
2. dar
3. nce
4. ent
5. ter
6. tal
7. nts
8. ket
9. les
10. ren
11. wer
12. ect
13. ach
14. tel
15. rot
16. dow
17. her
18. ich
19. ted
20. nty

Possible answers: (1) please (2) calendar (3) sentence (4) student (5) theater (6) hospital (7) parents (8) market (9) bottles (10) children (11) answer (12) architect (13) beach (14) hotel (15) carrot (16) window (17) teacher (18) sandwich (19) wanted (20) twenty.

continued on page 37

Techniques for Teaching Numbers to Young Second-Language Learners

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Prominent educators have been expressing their dissatisfaction with the existing ESL curriculum in elementary schools and are recognizing the need for the inclusion of content-area concerns. Virginia F. Allen et al. elaborate:

> Carefully selected content from several of the subject-matter fields can be used by the ESL teacher as content for language instruction. In the ESL class, pupils can learn basic elements of the social studies . . . and . . . science and mathematical processes. . . . (Allen et al. 1979:81)

John Haskell reflects similar sentiments:

> The ESL teacher *must* [emphasis mine] begin to move the student, not only into the English-speaking milieu of the English class but also into a geography class, a history class, a science class, a math class, etc. (Haskell 1978)

In keeping with this revitalized focus on content-area concerns, I will present some techniques for teaching English numbers to young second-language learners. These activities are best suited for elementary-school ESL students who know how to count in their native language.

The teacher writes the numbers from one to ten on the chalkboard as he says each number several times. To avoid the chainlike presentation of numbers that often undermines a student's ability to count with real facility, I suggest that the numbers be introduced in random order.

Next, students take turns coming to the chalkboard to point to different numbers so that the teacher can identify aloud the numbers indicated. This reversal of roles is gamelike for many children, and it helps to keep their attention.

Common classroom objects can be used to reinforce number concepts. For example, pencils, erasers, and crayons are readily accessible, and young students enjoy counting and manipulating such objects.

Choral-counting activities

Choral counting provides additional exposure to English numbers and affords pupils meaningful pronunciation practice. When leading children in the choral repetition of English numbers, the teacher is urged to speak naturally, and to discourage pupils from chanting their responses. To discourage chanted responses and to provide some diversification, the teacher can vary the modulation of the oral cue. As the teacher's volume gets lower, students are compelled to listen more acutely. Furthermore, many children enjoy mimicking the teacher's modulation as it changes from normal volume to a whisper.

The following modified choral-counting activity has been used effectively with very young students.

The teacher writes the numbers to be learned on the chalkboard and repeats each number several times. After

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the numbers have been introduced in this fashion, the teacher points to individual numbers on the chalkboard with a ruler or a pointer as he says each number aloud. When the teacher taps a particular number, the class chorally identifies it. (The teacher continues identifying numbers, taps a different number, and the class responds accordingly.) The class is to chorally identify only those numbers that the teacher taps.

The fact that the students don't know which number the teacher will choose for them to say adds an element of surprise that helps to sustain their interest. Also, the teacher can choose numbers that contain certain sounds. (Numbers such as *three*, *thirteen*, and *thirty-three* can be used for practicing *th* in initial position.)

Identifying missing numbers

Another technique that can be used effectively involves the identification of missing numbers. The class listens intently as the teacher begins counting in numerical order and purposely omits a number. For example, the teacher may count from eleven to twenty and omit the number *nineteen*. A student is called on to say which number was omitted; if the student responds correctly, the procedure is repeated, and so on. This activity can be played competitively by forming teams and awarding points for correct identifications. The first team to score five points is declared the winner.

Solving arithmetic problems

An activity that many children find appealing is the solving of simple arithmetic problems. Individual pupils are selected to answer questions such as *What is twelve plus three?* or *How much is eight plus five?* Of course, the difficulty of the problems should be commensurate with the class's ability. (Five minutes is ample time for this activity.)

Tips for using games

Pedagogic games have yielded favorable results in many elementary-school ESL classrooms. However, if important game-related strategies are not fully comprehended and implemented by the teacher, the game setting can be a source of frustration for everyone concerned. Even after an appropriate game is selected, its success or failure hinges on the following game-related strategies:

1. The teacher should have a thorough knowledge of the organization, techniques, and rules of the game.

2. The teacher should select only those games that he personally enjoys, so as to project enthusiasm to the students.

3. The teacher should keep the game well under control.

4. The teacher should stress the importance of good sportsmanship.

5. The teacher should not change the rules of the game without consulting the students first.

6. The teacher should provide students with opportunities for practice turns before points are awarded. Thus, the students have a clear understanding of what the game entails.

7. The teacher may award two or more points (with the children's approval) for the same task if the class seems to be tiring of a game. In this way, the game will not drag on—possibly creating negative associations for the students.

8. The teacher should avoid elimination games.

9. The teacher should not force a student to play a game if the child doesn't care to do so.

10. The teacher should avoid forming teams such as boys versus girls. It is much better to pit row against row or one half of the room versus the other half.

11. The teacher should try to schedule games at the end of the lesson, when many young children grow restless and are in need of a change of pace (Cortez 1975:308).

TEN GAMES FOR PRACTICING NUMBERS

Ten games appropriate for teaching English numbers are described below. Not all of them are competitive, but each one promotes learning within a fun context.

Silent numbers

Ten previously introduced numbers are written on the chalkboard in random order. The teacher tells the students that he will say one of the numbers on the chalkboard, but they will not hear which one. Students are then urged to watch carefully, otherwise they will not discern which number is being mouthed (spoken without sound) by the teacher.

The teacher mouths a number and then calls on a pupil. If the child has read the teacher's lips correctly, the child is awarded a point. (I suggest that the class be divided into two teams; the first team to score ten points is declared the winner.)

Showdown

Two students are selected to go to the chalkboard. The teacher says a number, and both students write that number as quickly as possible. This is done four times, and, on the fourth try, the first student to write the number spoken by the teacher gets to stay at the chalkboard. A different pupil is selected to compete against the current winner, and so on. Ten minutes is ample time for this activity.

If both children write an incorrect number, then two different students are asked to take their places at the chalkboard.

Happy face

The class is divided into two teams. Eight numbers are written on flashcards, shown to the class, and verbally identified by the teacher. The teacher's oral model is repeated several times by the entire class. A flashcard of a "happy face" is included with the other flashcards. All the flashcards are shuffled and then placed face down in a single pile.

The teacher holds up the first flashcard and calls on a student to identify the number. In the event of an error the entire class identifies the number. A pupil from the opposing team is called on to identify the next number, and so on. When the "happy face" card is turned up, the pupil whose turn it is then receives a point for his team. The flashcards are reshuffled after a point is awarded, and the procedure is repeated. The first team to score five points is declared the winner.

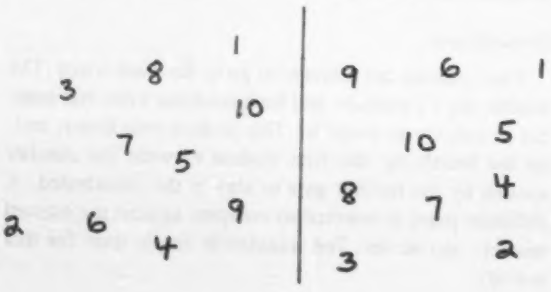
Hold it up

Two identical sets of flashcards that feature the numbers to be taught are needed for this game. Each set of flashcards should be placed face down on a desk or chair in front of the classroom.

Two children are chosen to come to the front of the room, and each is to stand behind one of the sets of flashcards. The teacher then calls out a number. The pupils must look through their respective piles and hold up that number. This is done three times, and on the third try, the first child to hold up the correct number gets to play again. Then another student is selected to compete against the winner, and so on. Ten minutes is ample time for this activity.

Collage

A portion of the chalkboard is divided into two parts with a long vertical line. The same numbers are written on both sides of the line, as shown below.



Two students are chosen to go to the chalkboard. The teacher says a number, and each student must point to that number on his side of the chalkboard. On the third try, the first student to point to the correct number gets to play again. A different pupil is selected to compete against the previous winner, and so on. Ten minutes is ample time for this activity.

The number box

The class is divided into two teams. Individual members from each team take turns as the game progresses.

The numbers currently being taught are written on index cards and placed in a box. Also included in the box are two index cards with large stars. A student draws a number from the box and identifies it aloud. If the pupil identifies it correctly, his team is awarded a point. Two points are awarded if the student draws a starred index card. Then an opponent from the other team is selected to draw a number from the box, identify it, and so on. The first team to score ten points is declared the winner.

If a pupil incorrectly identifies a number, the teacher cues the entire class to identify the number chorally. After all the numbers are drawn, they are shuffled and put back into the box.

Spin and say

The class is divided into two groups. Individuals from the two teams alternate turns as the game proceeds.

The teacher draws a large circle on heavy cardboard and divides the circle into equal parts. On each part of the circle a number is clearly written. An arrow is attached to the center of the circle so that it spins easily. A student is to spin the arrow and identify the number the arrow indicates. One point is awarded for a correct identification. The first team to score ten points is declared the winner.

If a student incorrectly identifies a number, the teacher cues the entire class to identify the number chorally.

Inundation

This activity is not played competitively. The chalkboard is divided into five sections; the teacher writes and orally identifies a different number in each section. Then the teacher calls on a student, the teacher says a number, and the student writes that number in the appropriate section (that is, in the section that already contains that number, as written by the teacher). This procedure should be repeated about five times for each student. (Pupils should be encouraged to write neatly and to keep an adequate space between the numbers written.) Eventually the chalkboard might look like this:

7 7 7	9 9 9	6 6 6	4 4 4	1 1 1
7 7 7	9 9 9	6 6 6	4 4 4	1 1 1
7 7 7	9 9 9	6 6 6	4 4 4	1 1 1
7 7 7	9 9 9	6 6 6	4 4 4	1 1 1

After the chalkboard is "inundated" with numbers, the teacher calls on a student, the teacher says a number, and the student erases that number from the appropriate section. The appeal of this activity for many young students is that the children enjoy darting from one end of the chalkboard to the other and erasing the numbers said by the teacher; consequently, a very quick pace is essential for the success of this activity.

Each student that is chosen to go to the chalkboard should erase approximately five or six numbers. If a student erases the wrong number, a different child is selected.

Magic numbers

This game should be played after the students have had some exposure to English numbers. Flashcards of the students' first names are needed for this game.

The class is divided into two teams. The teacher shuffles the name cards and then announces to the class that he has chosen a magic number, e.g., *eighteen*. The teacher or a responsible pupil calls out the name on the first flashcard, and that student is to respond by saying aloud the number *one;* the second name is read, and that student responds by saying aloud the number *two;* and so on.

Since the magic number has been stipulated as *eighteen*, the eighteenth pupil called receives a point for his or her team. After a point is awarded, the names are reshuffled, the teacher chooses a different magic number, and the game continues. The first team to score five points is declared the winner.

If a student makes a mistake and calls out the wrong number, the teacher then cues the entire class to say the correct number, and play resumes. (As a variation, numbers can be counted in descending order.)

Guess which number

The class is divided into two groups. Individual team members alternate, taking turns throughout the game. The teacher writes ten numbers on the chalkboard, and then says, "I am thinking of a number on the chalkboard." A volunteer is selected and asks the teacher, "Is it the number ____?" If the pupil guesses incorrectly, a member of the opposing team gets a turn, and so on. One point is awarded for each correct guess. The first team to score five points is declared the winner.

When appropriately implemented, the suggestions and pedagogic games here described can be very effective for teaching English numbers to the young second-language learner.

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Games for the Classroom continued from page 33

I have presented a small sample of games that can be used to create varied and interesting classes. As you experiment with games as a teaching device, you will find yourself constantly on the lookout for new ideas. You may have already noted that many of my games are well-known parlor games adapted to a classroom situation. Another particularly good source for ideas is the television. You would be surprised at the number of programs that can be modified for use in your classes. The possibilities for the use of games in teaching are great; in fact, the only limitation is your imagination.

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FORUM NEWS & IDEAS

GERMANY

Teaching Translation More Efficiently

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Throughout the present debate about the purpose of translation and the role it ought to play in the curriculum, one important factor is easily overlooked: the teaching of translation is becoming widely popular again.[1] At German universities, for instance, it is estimated that translation accounts for nearly half of all applied course offerings (Ettinger 1975:55). Of immediate need, therefore, are practical suggestions for improving the teaching of translation. Advances in classroom techniques need not await decisions on overriding issues, nor will they have much impact on such weighty questions as the following, that is, whether translation really is

> an unnatural activity or a highly specialized art . . . either not at all or (worse still) negatively related to how students operate in a genuine foreign-language environment. (House 1977:225)

Beyond such fundamental queries, which are unlikely to receive a quick answer, there are some issues which practically everyone can agree on. Given the perennial problem of limited contact hours, for example, the teaching of translation is inefficient in volume of material covered if it is done with reasonable accuracy and at the same time without losing sight of the work of individual students. Classroom discussion of student-translated texts is frustratingly time-consuming, must often be done on the basis of insufficient context (only about 300 words can be covered in an hour and a half), and thus threatens to deteriorate into a boring activity (cf., for instance, Göller 1967, Kleineidam 1974, Hausmann 1975). The oral-correction mode customarily used in class, moreover, is too fragmented and fleeting to be of lasting benefit to the individual; at their worst, translation exercises are not only inefficient but, because of their focus on errors, may be indeed dangerous (Hausmann 1975:54).

To counteract such undesirable factors, I present here a technique for improving the efficiency of translation by providing access to texts in greater volume without causing a concomitant loss in the quality of translation. Over a period of several semesters at the University of Tübingen, trial classes were held which called for assignments of up to 900 words per session. Customary translation texts were used, but exposure to longer passages improved text cohesion, and the students were given access to a permanent record reflecting the rationale and the various considerations followed in class in arriving at the final translated version. The permanent record not only contained the translated materials but also offered summary notes on the in-class correction process—incorporating all pertinent staff as well as student input. The increased load demands on both class and instructor that inevitably resulted were deflected through a careful scheme, further explained below. With this program—which is also applicable to other than university levels—a number of salutary gains could be noted, with some surprising side benefits.

A useful procedure

For maximal results, the following procedure was found to work best: each week a team of students (usually two, depending on class size) prepared an especially careful rendition of the homework assignment. This assignment had to be submitted several days prior to class discussion in three typed copies: the first was deposited in a special folder established for that purpose on the reserve shelf of the library, the second was given to the instructor, and the third copy was retained by the student team.

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During class discussion and correction, each of the teams functioned as secretaries and had to note down changes, improvements, and comments on their copy. To these notes they also added whatever additional information they found on the instructor's annotated copy (returned to them subsequent to class treatment) plus all contributions that the class as a whole could offer. This composite, final version then replaced the pre-class one on reserve (which, by the way, had served class members up to that time in preparing their own, less elaborate class assignments).

The advance copy for the instructor allowed him to work out a detailed and personalized teaching unit well ahead of class, thus making possible a reasoned, efficient treatment of the various problems and options that the assignment raised. It also allowed him to capitalize on cues that the translated text provided, which he could use both as a tie-in for more general comments and observations, and as a guide for preparing appropriate and parallel grammatical exercises in mimeographed form.

Additional benefits

To everyone's pleasant surprise, the quality of the translation assignments increased dramatically, and with it, of course, the entire level of class discussion. The team effort with its shared knowledge led to a more polished version, but, more importantly, the written version on display and open to public scrutiny by peers had a powerful psychological effect and consistently resulted in work of more sterling quality. For the main body of the class, furthermore, the ready access to a more rigorously honed rendition than would normally be prepared for class served as a ready pre-class reference source on how to deal with the trickier passages and other knotty problems. As such, it constituted a specific resource file naturally superior to the cold impartiality of a dictionary, and thus it reduced the usual frustration.

Even students who had not quite caught everything that was said in class, or those who were absent on a particular day, now had an opportunity to double-check particular points subsequent to class. The record on file also imparted an impression of both the tenor of that class session and the overall effect of the finished product. It should be emphasized that wherever the means exist, such solid advantages can be still further enhanced by xeroxing the typed text onto transparencies so that in-class corrections can be shown visually with an overhead projector and multicolored pens; there can be no doubt that a visual impression is more effective than an auditory stimulus alone.

Costs and rewards

A threefold increase in translation-text coverage as advocated here does not come without some cost, however. Each student, in addition to preparing weekly assignments in traditional fashion, had to serve once as part of the team that furnished the rather elaborate version in typed form. After some occasional early grumbling, the students in the experimental classes realized that by this means their work would receive unusually detailed and individual attention on the part of the instructor, and the ultimate effect of the added preparation by successive teams worked to everyone's benefit. In addition, an author's intent is better revealed in longer passages of continuous, more cohesive text, which also permits closer attention to his style and mood as reflected in translated form. All in all, there was a greater feeling of accomplishment both personally and academically. The uncontroversial portions of each text, by the way, were handled expeditiously by oral paraphrase in class, and those students who wanted to could still compare and confirm their renditions at leisure with the final version on permanent file.

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[1] I am indebted to Paul Westney for giving the paper a critical reading and for his helpful comments.

The technique described here unquestionably involves additional work, and while that can be dispersed somewhat on the student side, as explained above, there is no such handy dispersal effect for the instructor, who continues to labor alone. His only compensation lies in the refreshing spirit pervading the class because of the sense of rapid progress and greater personal achievement that students experience—an improvement over the former atmosphere, which at times deteriorated into the humdrum.

Efficiency and proficiency

In the foregoing, the stress was put on *efficiency*—that is, on the volume of material that can be covered profitably. That stress could instead be directed to *proficiency*, namely to endowing a less lengthy translation with much greater care and depth of treatment. Many teachers may prefer that alternative and could employ the proposed technique to that effect. Whether the focus in translation exercises is on efficiency or proficiency, the pedagogical effect is the same, as long as it enhances the learning process. What makes the effort so profitable in the present instance is that it is achieved through the cooperation and active participation of the students, who thus assume crucial responsibility in determining and strengthening their learning experience.

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ITALY

Using Newspapers to Teach Communication

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The "communicative approach" to language teaching has gained at least the theoretical allegiance of most language teachers. This is not strange; after all, the purpose of teaching a first language has always been to enable learners to communicate better, and there is no reason why this should not be true also of second- and foreign-language learners, who, except in rare instances, are learning the language in order to use it for some communicative end.

The problem for the foreign-language teacher is how to translate this basic principle into a coherent methodology. How to teach "communication" is not as obvious as how to teach grammar or any well-specified content. Grammar is a very precise subject, which can be taught much as one would teach geography. However, a knowledge of grammar does not constitute a language *ability*. Using a language is a learned behavior; communicating in it is a process; and behaviors and processes are not as easily taught as subject matters. Perhaps, like walking or riding a bicycle, they cannot really be taught at all; they are only learned. What do we do when we want to teach someone how to ride a bike? We show him how it is done, give some general advice, and tell him to try it, and to keep on trying it until he succeeds. There is no other way to "teach" such a behavior.

If this analogy holds, all the language teacher can do to "teach" the language is to present it to his students, use it with them, and encourage them to use it. To overcome their timidity and natural reluctance to make fools of themselves, he may have to play down the role of accuracy in favor of fluency. An interlanguage, after all, is better than no language at all. Accuracy is seldom attained even by native speakers, and only at great effort after long practice.

Criteria for "communicative" teaching

The methodological premises stated above are not new; they are, essentially, a restatement of the position taken by Leonard Newmark as long ago as 1966.[1] I will attempt here to draw some conclusions from them with regard to one particular way of presenting a foreign language.

Newmark maintains that language for imitation should be presented in "chunks" that are not too large for the learner to handle.[2] The implication of Wilkins's "analytic" approach is that such chunks of language should be authentic, not contrived.[3] Johnson, in a lucid article on communicative methodology, gives three conditions that such a methodology must meet: (1) it must be "task-oriented"; (2) it must involve information unknown to the learner; (3) the student must be permitted some choice in what he says. He says: "Fluency in communicative process can only develop within a 'task-oriented teaching'—one which provides 'actual meaning' by focusing on tasks to be mediated through language, and where success or failure is seen to be judged in terms of whether or not these tasks are performed."[4]

Of the second criterion, Johnson writes: "The concept of conveying information involves, as many linguists have testified, a notion of doubt. We can only be said to be conveying a piece of information to someone if they do not already know it. . . . It is the absence of this element of doubt in much language teaching which makes it non-communicative."[5] Further: "The concepts of selection and doubt are closely linked. To continue the earlier quotation from Cherry: 'information can be received only when there is doubt; and doubt implies the existence of alternatives—where choice, selection, or discrimination is called for.' "[6] To these criteria of a communicative methodology may be added another: that effective communication presupposes a common field of experience. As James A. Smith remarks, "Understanding between people is possible to the degree that their common fields of experience overlap."[7]

How newspapers satisfy the criteria

The intelligent use of newspapers in the foreign-language classroom can satisfy all the above criteria, providing the teacher uses them creatively. Newspapers usually contain fairly small "chunks" of language, which can be reduced even further according to the needs of the particular class. They are authentic material, thus fitting into the analytic approach. Understanding a newspaper article and comparing ideas about it is certainly an example of task-oriented learning, and can be made more

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[1] Leonard Newmark, "How Not to Interfere with Language Learning," reprinted in C.J. Brumfit and K. Johnson, *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), pp. 160–66.

[2] Ibid., p. 164.

[3] D.A. Wilkins, *Notional Syllabuses* (London: Oxford University Press, 1976), pp. 13–14.

[4] Keith Johnson, "Communicative Approaches and Communicative Processes," in *The Communicative Approach to Language Teaching*, pp. 192–205.

[5] Ibid., pp. 200–201.

[6] Ibid., p. 202.

[7] James A. Smith, *Creative Teaching of the Language Arts in the Elementary School* (New York: Allyn and Bacon, 1967), p. 32.

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so by specific techniques to be discussed later. The newspaper most likely contains information unknown to the students, and perhaps even interesting for them. But how any one person interprets an article, or what he says about it, is not predetermined; the element of choice is respected. And finally, the reading of the same articles creates a common experiential basis on which communication can take place.

Nevertheless, the exclusive use of newspapers as language material might create an atmosphere of boredom, once the novelty wears off. Hence, they should be combined with other teaching methods and materials. Furthermore, it should be noted that a newspaper can be used in either of two ways: as an object of study, or as a pretext for studying language. That is to say, learning how to read a newspaper may be (1) the *end* (and language the means) or (2) a *means* (and language the end). If too much attention is paid to language (analyzing structural forms and lexical items abstracted from their context), the communicative purpose will probably be defeated; therefore, of the two the first strategies will probably be the more effective. Language will then be learned as a by-product of learning how to read a newspaper and talk about its contents. Still, some analysis of the language used is inevitable, so that in practice the two strategies will tend to alternate.

A variety of material

For maximum learning—and to prevent boredom—our objective should be to enable the students to read and understand fluently the *entire* newspaper, not just pieces of it. The teacher should use different parts of the newspaper in different lessons. Only when students have become aware of the enormous wealth of material available in a newspaper and are able to utilize its full resources for their own edification or amusement can a program in the use of newspapers be called successful. The following is a list of some of the things that can be found in a typical English or American newspaper.

Masthead
Headlines
News articles and editorials
Weather forecasts
Photographs
Advertisements
Classified ads
Sports news
Comic strips
Political cartoons
Letters to the editor
Horoscopes
Book reviews
Recipes
Sewing and knitting patterns
Gardening advice
Bridge or chess columns
Stock market news
"Dear Abby" columns
Short stories
Fashion news
Jokes
Radio and TV programs
Cinema programs
Theater news
Music news
Financial news
Exchange rates
Maps
Obituaries

This list is by no means exhaustive, nor is every category exclusive of every other (classified ads are a subclass of advertisements, just as financial news is a subclass of news articles). Nor is every issue of every paper likely to contain all these items. Yet, there is enough here for at least a lesson on each category, a total of thirty lessons! Such a course is hardly likely to be dull, since the type of discourse involved in each lesson is different. And, at the end of the course, a student really ought to know how to read a newspaper, and should have learned a good deal of language along the way.

In many cases, special attention will have to be drawn to the language used. For instance, headlines are notoriously difficult for foreigners (and sometimes for native speakers), since they have a different grammar from normal English. Sports articles are in a class by themselves, since to the uninitiated they are meaningless jumbles of "foreign" words. Recipes, again, have a peculiar syntax and vocabulary. Letters to the editor are likely to contain "incorrect" usage (especially in provincial papers). Weather forecasts use a particular jargon. And so it goes. To understand the various elements of a newspaper means understanding the various registers used in it.

Suggested approaches

The course may also focus on an analysis of the layout of the paper, and what that conveys to the reader; or on the ideological position that can be inferred from the paper's choices—what it includes and excludes. (In this connection various newspapers may be compared to see how they differ from one another.) Or the course may focus on the communicative efficiency of visual as opposed to linguistic stimuli (which says more, a picture or a paragraph?), etc. The number of approaches is limited only by the teacher's (and students') imagination.

An analysis of the *meaning* of newspaper articles will involve training in the processes of logical thought, with reference to such indispensable concepts as illocution, inference, and presupposition.[8] And if the students try to decipher articles on subjects they have no knowledge or experience of (as when I try to read the sports news!), they will realize the importance of context, and the truth of the statement that communication relies for its effectiveness on shared experience and knowledge.

To increase the "information gap" between students and make the communicative process more interesting, it may be useful to let different students read different articles and then try to relate to one another the content of what they have read. Alternatively, they may relate it to the teacher (providing he or she has *not* read the article). Working in groups lends itself naturally to this activity. Class discussion of the ideas contained in provocative articles is feasible if the class is not too large.

One method might be to have the students read the article (or whatever) for understanding, talk about it, and then write either a summary of the article or their reactions to it. In this way, all four language skills are practiced.

At an advanced level, a class may even want to write and edit its own newspaper. This should be attempted only after the students have acquired some familiarity with the structure of a newspaper and a certain fluency in the use of English.

Possibilities and limitations

In conclusion, I would say that using newspapers in class can be an effective communicative method, one that could be made the backbone of an entire language course. At the same time that students are learning how to read a paper, they are also learning the language—and the culture—that the paper reflects. The only limitation on such a course is the imaginativeness of the teacher. If he makes a sincere effort to find out what his students are interested in, and to interest them in other subjects that may be new for them, he can meet with considerable success. The purpose of newspapers, after all, is to convey information, and they can serve as excellent primers for students who are learning to do just this. Their only limitation is that they do not, as a rule, serve other communicative functions besides conveying information. Newspaper articles do not normally express anger or annoyance or fear or despair (but readers may indeed react to them in such ways!). Hence, a communicative methodology would be incomplete if it proposed no models of language use other than newspapers. But given the variety of language models they do present, newspapers should certainly have a place in every foreign-language course. □

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[8] *Illocution* means, roughly, the function or purpose that an utterance serves in a given context. For a discussion of illocutionary acts, see J. Searle, *Speech Acts* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1969) and H.G. Widdowson, *Teaching Language as Communication* (London: Oxford University Press, 1978), pp. 22–24.

KOREA

The "Stair Plate" Approach to Intensive Paragraph Memorization

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Regardless of the suspicious attitude in some linguistic quarters toward memorizing sentences by rote, many enthusiastic foreign-language teachers and ardent learners stand unflinchingly on the pro side of this question. After all, in learning a foreign language the important thing is the attitude of the learner toward the target language. He should think of the language itself as his goal, and not simply as a means by which he can achieve success or earn a better income.

To help the learner toward this way of thinking, the learning of a foreign language should be to him somewhat of a "holy" undertaking. And the best way to make him feel this way about it is to have him memorize sentences that he comes across in his textbook, as preachers encourage their congregations to memorize meaningful lines from the Bible.

The erasing method

Memorizing sentences requires patience and effort, and it can quickly tire. Therefore, the learner must be properly motivated. Naturally, the material to be memorized should be as short as it possibly can be and still carry meaning. The paragraph suits this purpose in length as well as in meaning.

I have used the so-called erasing method to help the students memorize paragraphs. I am much obliged to whoever first published this useful approach. For those teachers who have no knowledge of it, I will explain briefly how it works.

The teacher prepares a set of sentences (which can be called a paragraph if they are linked together in meaning) and writes them on the blackboard. He helps the students understand the meaning of the sentences; then he erases part of the sentences, starting with, say, articles, then prepositions (depending on what part of speech you intend to emphasize), until there are no words left on the board.

After each erasure, the students are asked to read the whole paragraph by recalling the erased words or phrases. When I do this drill, I insist that all the students read the sentences in unison *rhythmically*;[1] otherwise I won't get the desired results, including the psychological reinforcement.

Although the rhythm drill in unison is difficult for Korean students, it gives them the feeling of being absorbed in learning, just as singing hymns together gives a congregation the feeling of being embraced in love. The long-range benefit of such drill is that the learner learns English without being conscious that he is learning it: rhythm, structure, vocabulary, and, of course, meaning. The psychological spinal cord of the learner is properly stroked; the stuff on the blackboard is chewed and eventually digested. I think it is one of the most effective methods for motivating the students.

Disadvantages of the erasing method

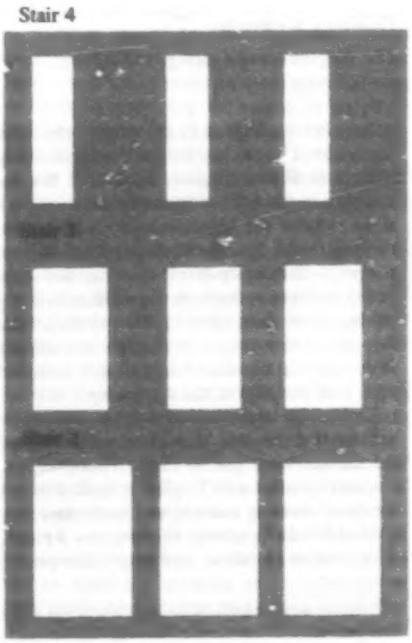
However, this method requires too much time and effort on the teacher's part. He has to write the whole paragraph on the board while the students do nothing (though some eager ones do try to grasp the meaning of the sentences flowing forth from the teacher's chalk!).

Another problem is that once part of the paragraph has been erased, it can't easily be retrieved if the students can't recall it. And usually quite a few students don't follow the teacher's directions, no matter how slowly he moves along.

The "stair plate" approach

To overcome these shortcomings and provide a variation of this effective drill, I have altered it to what I call the "stair plate" approach, because the contrivance I happened to think up resembles a flight of stairs (as shown in Diagram 1). It also symbolizes the steps the learner is to take, one after another, in memorizing the paragraph.

DIAGRAM 1



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Note: The width of the device should equal the length of the printed line of the textbook page. The height of the device should equal the vertical dimension of the textbook page.

The contrivance can be made of heavy paper or cardboard, or of plastic, so that it is semi-permanent. Green is the best color. The left margin is narrow, so that the beginning of every line of the paragraph will show through the "windows" as a useful hint for the learner.

I ask all my students to make one of these devices and carry it with them so that they can use it whenever they need to, in class or at home. Note that the diagram begins with Stair 2. Stair 1 is done without this plate; Stair 5 is also done without it.

Let's see how we can use it. First, the teacher decides in advance what paragraphs in the textbook should be memorized in this fashion. In picking them out, he should keep it in mind that they should include as many structures, words, and phrases as possible that need to be practiced. For example:

> He was none other than Albert Einstein. He was on his way home to 112 Mercer Street, cutting across the campus. Sometimes he liked to walk home the long way from his office. The students nodded and smiled in a friendly manner as he passed. He was a familiar figure by now.[2]

Step 1

The teacher deals with this paragraph without the stair plate. It's up to him whether the paragraph should be taught first with grammatical explanations, including rhythm, vocabulary, intonation, translation, or the other way around, that is, with the learner doing them alone. I use the former approach to save time.

Practicing proper rhythm, as shown in Diagram 2, is very important for syllabic-language speakers. Without rhythm, it is not English, it is Konglish.[3] Rhythm drills, although difficult, fascinate Korean students because they are interesting and challenging. Also, they help students pay closer attention and memorize the sentences more easily.

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[1] You may wonder why I emphasize the word *rhythmically*—after all, English *is* a rhythmical language. However, our language, Korean, is a syllabic language, so it is hard to train the students to get used to rhythm.

[2] From the Sina Yeongeo-sa's *High School English II* (Seoul: Dong-a Publishing Co.), p. 20. The underlined parts are new structures and words that the students must learn.

DIAGRAM 2

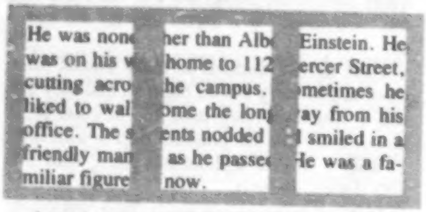
He was nóne óther than Álbert Éinstein. He was ón his wáy hóme to 1́1́2́ Mércer Stréet, cútting acróss the cámpus. Sómetimes he líked to wálk hóme the lóng wáy from his óffice. The stúdents nódded and smíled in a fríendly mánner as he pássed. He was a famíliar fígure by nów.

Step 2

After the grammatical explanations and so on, I ask the students to cover the paragraph with the "Stair 2" columns of their plates, as shown in Diagram 3.

Diagram 3

Stair 2



He was none her than Alb Einstein. He
was on his w home to 112 ercer Street,
cutting acro he campus. ometimes he
liked to wal ome the long ay from his
office. The s ents nodded l smiled in a
friendly man as he passe He was a fa-
miliar figure now.

Actual memorizing starts at this step. If the students are asked to memorize the whole paragraph without using these steps, they feel burdened, thinking the threshold too high. And if the teacher just tells them to memorize the paragraph at home, only a few ardent students will do it. (Learners tend to act as if homework assignments are done for the teacher's sake rather than their own. Add to that the necessity for the teacher to check them the next day or so. And just imagine the number of students! Such an assignment is unwise and irresponsible.)

Each student covers the paragraph with his own plate. There is a challenge, but not too much challenge. After all, most of the paragraph still shows.

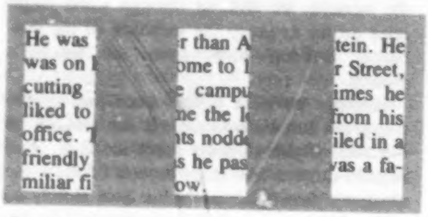
As shown in the diagram above, certain words are partly hidden. In this drill, the memorizing is done mainly individually, according to each student's ability. The student may peek under the plate once or twice. It's no sin, after all.

Step 3

After a few laps of Step 2, when a student thinks he can fill in the "blanks" (with eyes and mouth only, of course), he then proceeds to the next step, as shown in Diagram 4.

DIAGRAM 4

Stair 3



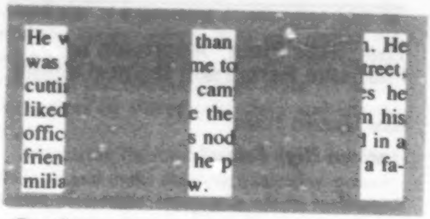
He was r than A tein. He
was on ome to r Street,
cutting e campu imes he
liked to ne the l from his
office. ts nodd iled in a
friendly s he pas vas a fa-
miliar fi ow.

Step 4

When he reaches this step, he can hardly see the paragraph, as shown in Diagram 5.

DIAGRAM 5

Stair 4



He w than . He
was me to treet,
cutti cam s he
liked e the n his
offic s nod l in a
frien he p a fa-
milia w.

Step 5

At this stage, the learner does not use his plate, but he should (and can) remember the whole paragraph without looking at the textbook. After all, he has already repeated the paragraph at least four times!

If he still does not feel confident, he can go back to the first stair and come up again.

Conclusion

It might seem as if the plate that covers part of the paragraph would stand in the way of learning, but we should remember that it does so in a challenging way. As mentioned earlier, this "stair plate" approach is a variation of the erasing method. Since that is true, why can't the teacher make a big plate and use it in front of the blackboard? □

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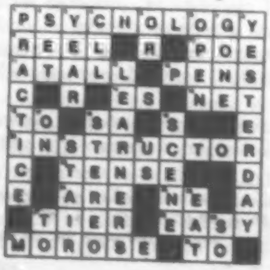
[3] *Konglish:* "Korean English."

solution to crossword puzzle



P	S	Y	C	H	O	L	O	G	Y
R	E	E	L		R		P	O	E
A	T	A	L	L		P	E	N	S
C		R		E	S		N	E	T
T	O		S	A		S			E
I	N	S	T	R	U	C	T	O	R
C		T	E	N	S	E			D
E		A	R	E		N	E		A
	T	I	E	R		E	A	S	Y
M	O	R	O	S	E		T	O	

POLAND

A Bilingual Technique for Teaching Technical Vocabulary to Higher Technical School Students

DANUTA KUKUŁKA
The Engineering College, Radom

After teaching English in secondary school for five years, I began teaching at the Engineering College in Radom. I soon discovered that the teaching methods I had formerly used were not at all suitable for higher-school students. According to the directives, during the 240-hour course,[1] elementary-level students are supposed to learn rudimentary grammar and everyday vocabulary (about 1000 words) so that they can communicate in English in everyday situations and translate fairly simple technical texts with the help of the dictionary.

These objectives would not be difficult to achieve if the course lasted two semesters and the classes were not so large. However, the students' contact with English is limited to one two-hour meeting a week, and each class consists of fifteen to twenty students. As a result, their progress is slow, and they consequently develop a "negative motivation" for learning English. English is a subsidiary subject, so the students devote as little time as possible to it—just enough to learn the minimum that will give them the necessary credits.

It is an accepted fact that meager results are achieved if the foreign-language learner is subjected only to the process of teaching, and the process of learning is neglected. Since I could not count on my students' doing much work outside of class, I had to find a way to make them leave the classroom actually *knowing* the material that had been planned for the lesson. After experimenting with various methods and techniques for three years, I decided on a "bilingual" technique for teaching both grammar and vocabulary. After using this technique for two years, I can say that it is the most efficient of all the techniques I have tried. I would like to show how this technique can be applied in teaching technical vocabulary. Let's take as an example the noun *piston*.

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[1] Taking holidays into consideration, it is in fact a 210-hour course.

The presenting and fixing stage

Teacher	Students
1. *Piston* means *tłok*.	Listen.
2. Asks the students to repeat: *piston*.	Repeat several times.
3. Writes the word on the blackboard and asks the students to read it.	Read the word several times.
4. Wipes the word off the blackboard and asks the students to translate some sentences into English, e.g.:	Translate the sentences in chorus:
a. Tłok porusza się w cylindrze.	*A piston moves in a cylinder.*
b. W silniku parowym Newcomen'a tłok poruszał długie pręty.	*In Newcomen's steam engine, the piston drove long rods.*
c. We wczesnych silnikach sila pary nie popychala tłoka.	*In the early engines, the force of steam did not drive the piston.*
5. Writes these sentences on the blackboard and asks the students to translate them into their mother tongue.	Translate the sentences individually.
6. Asks the students to give their own examples of using the word *piston* in a sentence.	Make sentences individually.

In this way, every new lexical item is presented and thoroughly practiced. If it is a noun denoting a mechanical device and the teacher has an appropriate illustration in his/her collection of visual aids, it is good to show this to the students while giving the meaning of the word in their native language, thus relating, indirectly, the language sign and reality.

After all the new words and expressions have been presented and practiced, the teacher proceeds to the next stage, which I call "the second phase of fixing." It is carried out in the following way:

The second phase of fixing

Teacher	Students
1. Writes all the new vocabulary on the blackboard and, pointing at a word or expression, asks the students to translate it into their mother tongue.	Give the meanings in their mother tongue in chorus.
2. Pointing at a word, asks the students to translate a sentence from their mother tongue into English. (The same sentences as in Stage 1 can be used.)	Translate the sentences individually.
3. Pointing at a word or expression, asks the students to use it in sentences of their own.	Make their own sentences.
4. Wipes the words and expressions off the blackboard and asks the students to translate some sentences from English into their mother tongue in their copybooks, e.g.:	Write translations of the given sentences:
a. In the early engines, the outside air pressed the piston into the vacuum.	We wczesnych silnikach powietrze z zewnątrz wciskało tłok w prożnię.
b. In the internal-combustion engine, the piston drives a flywheel.	W silniku spalinowym tłok porusza koło zamachowe.
c. Pistons in a steam engine have reciprocating motion.	Tłoki w silniku parowym poruszają się ruchem posuwisto-zwrotnym.
5. Goes around the classroom checking the students' work.	

The technique presented above gives best results if two conditions are fulfilled. First, the teacher must be careful when planning the amount of new lexical items. Ten to twelve new words and expressions is the upper threshold for the students during the forty-five-minute class. Besides, the technique is rather time-consuming, and it would be impossible to introduce more new vocabulary. If several of the new words are very similar to their mother-tongue equivalents, e.g., English *parameter* – Polish *parametr*, the number of new items can be increased to fifteen.

Second, the sentences given to the students to translate should be short and—this is extremely important—they should be true. The latter condition imposes on the teacher the task of carefully preparing the sentences ahead of time, unless he/she, in addition to being a foreign-language teacher, is an expert in a particular branch of science and is not afraid his/her improvisation would make the students roar with laughter.

The bilingual technique of presenting new vocabulary has very positive side effects. It gives the students an opportunity to consolidate their knowledge of English grammar. The three sentences given in point 4 of the presenting and fixing stage enable the students to reinforce their knowledge of (1) how and when to use the simple-present tense, (2) the English genitive form, (3) how and when to use the simple-past tense, (4) negative sentences in the simple-past tense. The teacher can prepare the sentences in such a way as to elicit a grammatical construction he/she thinks should be reinforced. However, he/she must be careful not to make the students use a construction they rarely come across and do not remember very well, because this would lead to their concentrating on grammar too much instead of on the main objective of the exercise.

This technique has proved succesful with my students under the conditions described at the beginning of this article. It can be used in teaching everyday vocabulary as well, and I have done so with good results in my classes for first- and second-year students.

Danuta Kukulka has been teaching English as a foreign language at the Engineering College in Radom, Poland, for six years, as well as teaching English to a class of engineers at Chief Technical Organization in Radom for the past two. She began her career as an English teacher in secondary school. She holds an M.A. in applied linguistics from Warsaw University.

UNITED STATES

Dicussion and Writing Groups

CARL T. GOLDENBERG III

Even if a teacher has many activity options when working with advanced learners of English, he may still be handicapped by large numbers in a class and lack of motivation among students. "Problem solving" groups can stimulate production of English, integration of course content, and student interest.

During the 1979–1980 academic year at the Faculty of Arts, Silpakorn University, Thailand, the small-group problem-solving activity was used with two classes each with twenty-seven sophomores who were taking required courses in English, and with a class of fifty-seven junior English majors in a writing course. The highly satisfactory results may be replicated in a variety of institutions.

The sophomores, still in general education, had six classroom hours of English per week, in which they studied all skills and developed understanding of English literature. One hour each week was given to small-group problem solving. In each class, six groups of four or five students were given different questions to discuss and finally write about (briefly), within the hour, on one paper. The questions usually concerned a poem from the series given to them in their introduction to poetry, or sometimes related to the external reading assignment in fiction for that week.

Students had to discuss the problem in English, or be penalized for using Thai. The instructor merely observed, while he circulated among groups to answer questions, clarify a problem, or give clues when needed. Most of the time, however, students were too involved in discussion to appeal for help.

Students also seemed to enjoy the variety of interactions among themselves as the groups varied from week to week. By the end of the semester, each student had been in a small group with nearly every other student, and never with the same mix twice.

As attendance was not required in any class, special interest in the problem-solving hour could be observed. For one class of twenty-seven, attendance ranged from 68% (during explanation of fiction) to 86% (during note-taking practice). During the problem-solving hour, attendance was 90%.

In the second class, problem-solving participation was only 82% overall, but 88% during the last three nongraded times. Students in this class generally were shyer or slower in speaking at the beginning of the term and more gradually became interested in the problem-solving experience. For no other activity did they participate more than 87%, however.

The problem-solving approach seemed even more successful in the huge (fifty-seven learners) writing class for junior English majors. The class met four times weekly. In the first hour, students were informed about general problems in writing, coached about writing short stories, and given a homework assignment. In the other three hours, students received assignments in writing poetry, news articles, and art criticism. They solved the "problems" in groups of three to five, as each group collaborated to produce a brief poem, an aspect of a news article, or an explanation of reactions to a work of art.

Student groups were not preselected by the instructor, as it would have been too time-consuming to organize each hour. Students formed groups as they entered the class. They had to use English only.

Even with no required attendance or marks given for work, participation was 84%, 86%, and 90% respectively for the three kinds of problems in creative writing. Participation could not have been more than 70% the previous year, when this course was given to fifty-two learners in a more traditional format, in which discussions were not integrated with writing assignments.

For a teacher working with students usually quite shy about speaking English and not at all enthusiastic about writing it, there was a feeling of joy to see a large roomful of learners chatting away noisily and cooperating intently to produce an acceptable piece of writing. The amount and quality of material was surprising, too. Interest in writing extended to the short-story homework, where participation was 91%. Many pieces from all the juniors' practice work were selected for printing in the seniors' creative writing journal.

If motivation is highly correlative with learning, the small-group problem-solving approach appears highly effective. And in the field of second-language learning it offers experience in integrating all four skills with relevant context.

Recently returned to Washington from Thailand, where he taught at Silpakorn University in Nakhon

Pathom for many years, **Ted Goldenberg** is presently considering career alternatives. He holds a Ph.D. in Education from Michigan State University, and has, as his special interest in ESL, research, writing, and curriculum development.

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Getting Down to Business

GEORGE J. KELLY
Georgia State University

In submitting his article to the FORUM *for publication, Mr. Kelly sent us also this accompanying information:*

"I taught ESL in a private colegio in Cali, Colombia, between 1978 and 1980. Fresh out of a Master's program in ESL, I found myself in Cali with a head full of ideas, a heart full of enthusiasm, and a school sorely lacking in directed ESL materials. It was there that I first became acquainted with the ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM*, and I was immediately attracted by its practical and useable subject matter.*

"It is in this tradition that I present this work to you. Not only is it readily applicable to classroom use, but it provides means for acquiring and building up English-language-teaching materials for the school as a whole."

This article was written as a result of my experiences in Colombia, South America, teaching intermediate and advanced ESL at the high-school level. Many of my students there hoped to attend college or to seek employment in the United States upon graduation, and these same students were in the process of writing formal business letters in pursuit of their U.S. goals. Preliminary drafts of these letters revealed as many different layouts and approaches as there were students. Clearly, what they needed was a very clear concept of what constitutes a good business letter.

Few topics would seem to hold as much potential for drudgery as learning how to write a correct, formal business letter. Conversely, few skills that we teach our ESL students at the high-school age or above are likely to be as important in their later lives as the writing of business letters: these students may find, in the very near future, that obtaining vital information concerning studies, matriculation, or even employment depends on their skill in writing one of these simple, dry little letters.

Yes, they are simple, and should be written in clear, natural, ordinary English. Students need not clutch at dictionaries and thesauruses in order to make their writing "more business-like." Yes, they are dry. Only essential information need be included, with as few elaborations as are practical; hence, they are "little." A business letter should be short. A letter may have only two paragraphs; a paragraph may be only a single sentence.

Therein lies a possible cultural conflict for foreign students. The streamlined language of the U.S. business letter appears discourteously direct and overly curt when compared to that of other countries. What is considered rhetorical protocol in a foreign country is wordy and unnecessary in the context of a U.S. business letter.

How to make a simple, dry, short letter interesting to learn about? My first suggestion capitalizes on basic human nature: initially and throughout the unit the teacher can foster a sort of back-handed motivation by emphasizing—perhaps overemphasizing—the ideas of directness, simplicity, and brevity. As catalysts for ESL writing, these ideas are irresistible. As guidelines for writing business letters, they are imperative.

Secondly, the teacher should explain in detail each separate part of a business letter, and why it is as it is, rather than merely prescribing to the students a correct format or stock expressions. Why the need for an inside address when it is already on the outside envelope? Why is the date so important? Why keep language to a minimum? Take one step below the surface, and the dry business letter springs to life.

And finally, remember that business letters are written for a specific purpose, and that purpose usually entails some sort of reply. From the very beginning, stress the fact that the letters actually will be mailed, and hopefully, that replies will be received. The letters will be going outside of the class—perhaps outside of the country. They will be read and replied to. (More details on potential correspondents will follow later in this article.)

What follows is a subjective examination of each component of a business letter with mention made only of those factors which may be problematic, or be of surprising interest to your ESL students. Various supplementary and follow-up business-letter-writing activities will also be suggested.

Overall layouts

Since there is no one correct layout, inform the students that they will learn, of course, the easiest one: everything single-spaced, no indentations, "heading" in the upper right-hand corner, and all other parts of the letter, "close" and "signature" included, typed or written down the left-hand margin, with a double-space between each part. This makes for a clean look and ease in reading. If applicable, it greatly simplifies and expedites the work of the typist. This layout is the most prevalent format used by businesses today, for just these reasons.

Heading

Since the envelope invariably gets discarded upon opening, a full, detailed heading, that is, the date and the letter-writer's address, is essential. In the headings, it is essential to be consistent in the use of abbreviations. In English, unlike the practice in many other languages, the month, day, then year, are written, in that order.[1] The date is especially important because, in reply, most business letters are referred to by date, e.g., "In response to your letter of 28th June. . . ." The date may mean the difference between making a crucial deadline or not on an order or application. Also, the date chronologically clarifies multiple and consecutive orders for products from the same company.

Inside address

If the writer is making carbon copies of all letters sent out, a detailed inside address, that is, the address of the person who is receiving the letter, makes identification of the letter easier for filing purposes. Again, once the letter reaches its destination, the envelope is discarded, so the inside address should be as specific as possible. Use the correspondent's title or department if the name is not known. A specific inside address may save the letter from days of desk-to-desk travel before it finally reaches the person who can be of the most assistance.

Salutation

"Dear ______:", filling in the blank with the correspondent's name, if known. When the name is not known, "Dear Sir:" is always acceptable. When writing to a firm or group and not to any specific individual, "Gentlemen:" may be safely used in all cases. Feminist complaints notwithstanding, the aforementioned salutations still seem more personable than the austere "To Whom It May Concern:". Above all, punctuate the salutation with a colon. A colon means business.

Body

Go directly to the point of the letter as soon as possible. Using the words "please" and "thank you" is the extent of required civility—everything else is straight business. Write only what is absolutely necessary. Explain to the students that it is often the correspondent's secretary who reads and replies to routine letters of inquiry, request, and verification; therefore, peripheral discourse is immaterial, and only serves to confuse the issue at hand. In the business world, it is a common practice to answer the shortest and simplest letter first.

Closing

Stay on the left-hand margin. A simple "Sincerely," punctuated with a comma, is acceptable in all cases. Illegible handwritten signatures are not impressive in any way. For women, when typing the name below the handwritten signature, it is still helpful to include the preferred title (Miss, Mrs., or Ms.), so that the correspondent will know how to address the reply.

As mentioned earlier, these are only a few brief hints as to how to stimulate student interest, reduce student apprehension, and predict possible trouble spots in the writing of business letters. It is up to the teacher to fill in the main details of the lesson. The most effective motivational strategies involved therein are clear: when teaching, include as many practical explanations as possible—teach students not only the "how," but also the "why"; avoid artificially formalizing the language of the letter—strive for simple, direct language close to the student's own language level; finally, get the completed letters out of the classroom and into the mail.

The question of who is to pay for the actual postage costs can only be answered by you, the teacher. If the students are not willing or able to cover the cost themselves, perhaps the school can be coaxed into footing the bill. As we shall see in the practical applications which follow, the replies received will prove to be sources of deep satisfaction for the individual students; moreover they may serve to benefit the school as a whole.

Once the bare-bone essentials of business-letter form and writing are learned, the possibilities for supplementary and follow-up activities are endless. Here are a few tried-and-true practical applications for the ESL teacher abroad.

U.S. college and university catalogues

Have each student write to a different college or university in the United States, Canada, or England. Catalogues, brochures, and information about financial aid programs may be requested. Expose the students to both large and small institutions, liberal arts and technical. Besides establishing a sizeable college resource section in the library or classroom, this exposure also prompted many students in my school to pursue further studies in the United States and gave them a new goal and seriousness of purpose. Furthermore, the materials received were later used for reading and note-taking exercises.

U.S. businesses

Large corporations and sales offices are always eager to reply to letters of inquiry about products or processes. Requests for catalogues, brochures, or specific prices seldom go unanswered. By writing for general information to businesses in fields of student interest, a type of employment resource section can be established in the library or classroom. By requesting prices on specific products, the students gain practice in writing order letters and using a column arrangement for a list of items. Again, the materials received may be later used for instruction in a variety of language skills.

English-speaking embassies or consulates

Upon request, these can be sources of a wealth of material written in English. Vital information regarding immigration, import and export regulations, as well as business and cultural policies of the guest country can be requested. These cultural outposts may also furnish information regarding English-speaking organizations and activities in the host country that may be of interest to students for further language practice.

"Freebies"

At the risk of sounding like an advertisement for book and publisher, one particular book merits consideration here. *1001 Valuable Things You Can Get Free*, by Mort Weisinger, now in its 1979, 11th revised edition, is an available and invaluable source of materials which can be adapted for English-language instruction.[2] One copy of this book may prove to be one of the most useful resource books that a teacher or school can own. It lists giveaways sponsored by business, industry, non-profit organizations, and the U.S. government that are available for the asking, either free, or for a nominal postage charge. The number and variety of giveaways is staggering: dictionaries, maps, photographs, posters, catalogues, as well as booklets and brochures on every topic from acne to the wonders of the world, to name but a few. While you may anticipate some extra handling costs for overseas delivery of some items, almost all the materials that you send away for will more than justify the price of postage. Given tangible rewards such

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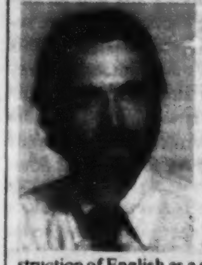
[1] Editor's Note: Some Americans prefer to write the day first and the month second.

[2] Mort Weisinger, *1001 Valuable Things You Can Get Free*, 11th edition (New York: Bantam Books Inc., 1979).



George Kelly teaches in the ESL Department at Georgia State University in Atlanta, Georgia. At various times in the past, he has taught ESL at the preschool, high school, university, and adult education levels. He credits previous experiences in teaching drama and snow skiing with helping to develop the "audience sensitivity and healthy eclecticism" needed in the instruction of English as a second language.

as are found in this book, your students simply will not be able to write business letters fast enough.

Letterhead stationery

If your school has duplicating machines available, individual classes can design and reproduce their own letterhead stationery. Each class member submits a letterhead design which includes all the usual heading information except the date; the entries are judged by the class as a whole, and the most desirable letterheads can be reproduced on blank paper for use. With thoughtful design, a stationery letterhead can lend both a professional and a personal touch to correspondence. Only the date need be filled in by the writer for the heading portion. When using letterhead stationery, more and more businesses are placing the date on the left-hand margin.

Conclusion

Given the instructional strategies and applications presented in this article, a unit on how to write business letters adheres closely to Stevick's three qualities of an effective language lesson, which he calls transparency, lightness, and strength.[3]

Transparency in a lesson regards the extent to which the student knows what he is doing and why he is doing it. Lightness regards the length and difficulty of a lesson: is it so long that the student wearies of it, or the level of language so difficult that the lesson becomes tiring? Finally, strength regards the lesson's ability to carry its own weight by means of the rewards that it makes available: is the content relevant to the present and likely future concerns of the students? Will the students be able to use the content of the lesson immediately, in a meaningful way?[4]

Clearly, a unit on business-letter writing as suggested here fully embraces these three qualities; indeed, in very few cases will the ESL teacher work with a language unit that so easily embodies them. The simple, dry little business letter can be fruitful for teacher, student, and school alike.

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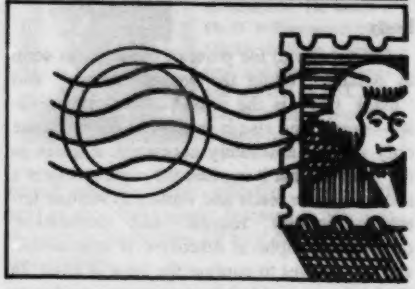
[3] E.W. Stevick, *Adapting and Writing Language Lessons*, Chapter III. (Washington, D.C.: Foreign Service Institute, 1971).

[4] Stevick, pp. 46–48.

Letters



Quingo: A New Twist to a Familiar Language Game

Uberlândia, Minas Gerais
Brasil
18 March 1981

Dear Editor:

Surely every language teacher knows how useful the game of Bingo is for teaching and drilling numbers. Three of our teachers—Maria Cristina Rezende, Paula Silvia Menicucci, and Beatriz Mendonça Alves—have come up with a new twist to the old game, which helps to drill and review structure, or just gives the class a change of pace. We call it *Quingo*, or *Question Bingo*.

Using one book of the series we teach (Mellgren and Walker's *New Horizons in English*, Addison-Wesley Publishers), the teachers chose sixty-six exchanges from the dialogues and drills. They wrote the introductory utterance of each exchange (which may or may not be a question) on a small card, and numbered these cards from 1 to 66. These are the "call" cards. Then they made eleven "Quingo" cards—that is, they wrote the sixty-six plausible answers or answering utterances in random order on the eleven cards, six answers to a card, with each answer numbered to match its corresponding question (or introductory utterance) on the call card. The difficulty here is to choose unambiguous exchanges—that is, to have only one really plausible answer to each of the questions or introductory utterances—in order to avoid confusion during the game.

The cards are distributed among the students, and the teacher—or, better, a student—calls out the phrase on a call card. The student who thinks that a phrase on his Quingo card answers the phrase read out raises his hand. The call phrase is then repeated, and the student reads the appropriate answering phrase. If he is correct (the numbers must coincide), he receives the call card to cover that square on his Quingo card. The game continues in this fashion until one student has covered all six spaces on his card. Small, inexpensive prizes are given to the first three winners, and a consolation prize to the loser.

A similar game for vocabulary drill or review can be made up by writing vocabulary words on the call cards and a synonym or definition of each of these words on the Quingo cards. Our teachers are now making both versions for each book in the series. It is a lot of work, especially if you do it alone, but get your colleagues to help you, and you'll be rewarded by the students' enthusiasm and achievement—as we have been.

We'd like to thank all of you at Forum for the wonderful help your magazine is to language teachers, and for your attention to our letter.

Cordially yours,
Miriam Snell Menicucci
General Director
Instituto Cultural Brasil–Estados Unidos
Pça. Coronel Carneiro, 84–Centro
38.400 Uberlândia, Minas Gerais,
Brasil

Rules for Spelling Words Ending in *-ing*

Lista de Correos
Armería, Colima
México Tr. 28300
13 March 1981

Dear Ms. Newton:

Will you be so kind as to inform me of the rules on how to add the suffix *-ing* to English verbs that end in the letter *e*, and for verbs that end with only one consonant preceded by only one vowel? For example:

1. write—writ*ing*
2. gie—gie*ing*
3. gee—gee*ing*
4. die—dy*ing*
5. plan—plan*ning*
6. pay—pay*ing*
7. throw—throw*ing*

None of the numerous grammar books that I have give correct rules for producing the *-ing* form.

You have my permission to publish my inquiry in the English Teaching Forum. Your answers will help many English teachers.

Respectfully yours,
Rafael Bruce
Director
Armería Lions Club English-Spanish Social Services

The Editor Replies

1. Verbs that end in *-e:*

a. Verbs that end in a "silent *e*" following a consonant drop the *e* before *-ing: write–writing, hope–hoping, care–caring, stare–staring, plane–planing, have–having, save–saving, love–loving, produce–producing, struggle–struggling, breathe–breathing, please–*

pleasing, *change–changing*, etc. An exception is *singe–singeing* (as distinguished from *sing–singing*).

b. Verbs that end in *-e* preceded by a vowel other than *i* (that is: *-ee*, *-oe*, and *-ye* retain the *e* when adding *-ing: see–seeing, flee–fleeing, free–freeing, agree–agreeing, hoe–hoeing, shoe–shoeing, canoe–canoeing, dye–dyeing, eye–eyeing*.

However, most verbs that end in *-ue* drop the *e* before *-ing: sue–suing, imbue–imbuing, construe–construing, pursue–pursuing, rue–ruing* etc. In some cases, the *e* may be dropped or retained: *glue–gluing* or *glueing, cue–cuing* or *cueing, blue–blueing* or *bluing, true–truing* or *trueing, clue–clueing* or *cluing*, etc.

c. Verbs that end in *-ie* drop the *e* and change *i* to *y* before adding *-ing: die–dying, tie–tying, vie–vying, lie–lying*, etc.

(Notice that *dyeing* [from *dye*] is distinguished from *dying* [from *die*].)

(Your No. 2—*gie*—is only a Scottish variant of *give* [cf. Robert Burns's "Oh wad some power the giftie gie us / To see oursels as others see us!"]; hence its apparent irregularity need not concern us in any general discussion of English spelling.)

2. Verbs that end with a single consonant preceded by a single vowel:

a. If the final syllable of the verb (before *-ing*) is a strongly stressed syllable, the consonant is doubled: *run–running, stop–stopping, hop–hopping, plan–planning, star–starring, occur–occurring, admit–admitting, begin–beginning, rebel–rebelling, compel–compelling, control–controlling, prefer–preferring*, etc. An exception is the consonant *x* (which functions essentially as two consonants, and is never doubled): *tax–taxing, relax–relaxing*, etc.

b. After a medium-stressed syllable, the final consonant is sometimes doubled: *kidnap–kidnapping* or *kidnaping, program–programming* or *programing*, etc.

c. In an unstressed syllable, the final consonant is in most cases *not* doubled: *open–opening, offer–offering, cover–covering, color–coloring, audit–auditing*, etc. In some words the final consonant may be doubled in an unstressed syllable: *worship–worshiping* or *worshipping, focus–focusing* or *focussing, travel–traveling* or *travelling, cancel–canceling* or *cancelling*, etc. (Verbs ending in unstressed *-el* may double the *l* before *-ing*, but a single *l* is more frequent in American English; in British English the *l* is regularly doubled.)

3. Verbs that end in a semivowel (*y* or *w*) preceded by a vowel simply add *-ing: pay–paying, throw–throwing, follow–following, skew–skewing, draw–drawing, employ–employing, convey–conveying*, etc.

Note: Words ending in *-ic* change to *-ick* before *-ing: frolic–frolicking, panic–panicking*, etc. This preserves the "k" sound of the *c*. Note that, in general, the addition, retention, or deletion of a letter before *-ing* tends to preserve the pronunciation of "long" (diphthongal) or "short" vowel sounds in the words—e.g., *hoping* vs. *hopping*, *staring* vs. *starring*, *planing* vs. *planning*. (This point was discussed in some detail by Virginia French Allen in the first of her two articles on teaching beginning reading, in the January 1977 issue of the FORUM.)

The reader should note that the analysis that we have given here does not cover all cases of verb + *-ing;* our intent has been to provide practical generalizations for the specific cases requested.

Teacher Pen Pals?

Lima
21 June 1981

Dear Editor:

I am a Peruvian English teacher and subscriber to the ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM. My name is Hector H. Bobbio.

I would like to know the names and addresses of international correspondence clubs in the U.S.A. which exchange tapes and any other information useful to classroom teaching.

Please respond to:

Hector Hugo Bobbio E.
1795-H. Francisco Lazo-Lince
Lima 14, Peru

Sincerely yours,
HECTOR HUGO BOBBIO E.

[Can any readers supply the requested information?—ED.]

"Communicative Competence"

Department of English
Faculty of Humanities
Srinakharinwirot
(Patumwan) University
Henri Dunant Rd.
Bangkok, Thailand

Dear Editor,

What is communicative competence?

This is not one of those rhetorical questions to be answered by the asker, but a *mea culpa* admission of ignorance.

Last year (1980), just before a communicative-competence testing seminar in Singapore, a much esteemed colleague was asked, over coffee. "It would take too long to tell," he replied.

This year (1981) just before a communicative-competence teaching conference by Thai TESOL, another colleague—equally esteemed; the department star, in fact—asked the same question. I blathered half an hour, but she saw through the snow job. "You're supposed to know these things," she said.

Since then, I've wandered around and about, and come out the same door wherein I went.

I think communicative competence is something we L$_2$ers have trouble teaching because it can't be pinned down to a skill. We can only deal with the interrelationships between ideas, behaviors, and forms, and these are infinite.

Linguists have done a good job in textualizing forms, but that's only one third of the indivisible scene. "Ideational" and "interpersonal" areas are respectively claimed by science-fiction writers and other philosophers and by experts on etiquette like Emily Post. The "four skills" show communicative *abilities* of interpretation, expression, and negotiation, and the classic Chomsky defintion is careful to separate competence from ability.

This simplistic smorgasbord holds no cues for how to teach or test communicative competence; what is needed is a working (functional) definition. Hence, an appeal to you.

Respectfully,
DONALD E. BOTT

The Editor Replies

Reading between the lines of your letter, we suspect that you already know the kind of definition we shall supply below, but are not satisfied with it, and are looking for something more "functional," as you say. Nevertheless, the following may be of some interest to you, and, we hope, to many readers who may be seeking a clearer understanding of both the meaning and implications of "communicative competence."

The term *communicative competence* has been used by sociolinguists to include both knowing a language (linguistic competence) and knowing how to use it.

The difference between *linguistic competence* and *communicative competence* is set forth by Dell Hymes:

> Linguistic theory treats of competence in terms of the child's acquisition of the ability to produce, understand, and discriminate any and all of the grammatical sentences of a language. A child from whom any and all of the grammatical sentences of a language might come with equal likelihood would be of course a social monster. Within the social matrix in which it acquires a system of grammar a child acquires also a system of its use, regarding person, places, purposes, other modes of communication, etc.—all the components of communicative events, together with attitudes and beliefs regarding them. There also develop patterns of the sequential use of language in conversation, address, standard routines, and the like. In such acquisition resides the child's *sociolinguistic* competence (or, more broadly, communicative competence), its ability to participate in its society as not only a speaking, but also a communicating member.[1]

Bernard Spolsky points out that

> assessing linguistic competence . . . is not enough for practical or educational purposes: we are interested not just in the fact that someone knows a

---

[1] Dell Hymes, *Foundations in Sociolinguistics* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1974), p. 75.

language but that he knows how to use it. Educational linguistics is concerned, therefore, not just with linguistic competence but with what is termed communicative competence.

The dimensions of communication have been set out by Dell Hymes[2] following Roman Jakobson.[3] Any speech event, Hymes suggests, is made up of seven components or factors:

1. sender (addresser, speaker, writer)
2. receiver (addressee, listener, reader)
3. a message form
4. a channel
5. a code
6. a topic
7. a setting

Communicative competence involves each of these and the interactions between them. A member of a speech community needs to be able to function both as sender and receiver and to select appropriate message forms, channels, and codes according to the receiver, topic, and setting.

Some notion of the range of possibilities can be illustrated by giving a list of normal complaints about a person's communicative competence. Each complaint in ordinary language is translated into Hymes' terminology.

1. "She talks all the time." *Refusal to alternate as listener.*

2. "You're not listening to me." *Failure to give signals of attention when acting as listener.*

3. "He doesn't know how to tell a joke; he always messes up the punch line." *Lack of control of message form.*

4. "There's no point telling me on the phone; send me a letter." *Incorrect selection of channel.*

5a. "I'm sorry, I don't understand German." *Wrong code (language).*

5b. "You have a peculiar way of pronouncing that word." *Wrong code (regional dialect).*

5c. "Your grammar is terrible." *Wrong code (social dialect or style).*

6. "I can show you how, but can't explain something like that." *Lack of control of topic.*

7. "You mustn't use that word to me." *Failure to suit code to setting or receiver.*

The full range of communicative competence involves not just the semantics, grammar, and phonology of linguistic competence, but sets of rules governing the appropriateness of various forms according to topic, setting, and audience.[4]

---

[2] Dell Hymes, "The Ethnography of Speaking." In *Anthropology and Human Behavior*, ed. Thomas Gladwin and W.C. Sturtevard (Washington, D.C.: Anthropology Society of Washington, 1962), pp. 13–53.

[3] Roman Jakobson, "Closing Statement: Linguistics and Poetics." In *Style in Language*, ed. Thomas A. Sebeok (Cambridge, Mass.: The Technology Press of Massachusetts Institute of Technology and John Wiley & Sons, 1960), pp. 350–77.

[4] Bernard Spolsky, *Educational Linguistics* (Rowley, Mass.: Newbury House Publishers, 1978).

Ring around the Circle

Redlands, California
18 April 1981

Dear Editor:

Enclosed is a description of a game which I am submitting for possible publication in FORUM. I discovered the game in Borneo while observing the natives play it at their jungle schools. A current Japanese student of mine drew the picture, which I hope you will include in the article.

I have been teaching in the ESL field now for ten years, starting in the Peace Corps in Malaysia as a Schools Advisor, later to become headmaster of a primary school, and farther down the line as director of an English language training program in Saudi Arabia. I also taught in Portugal, and I am currently teaching in California.

I hope you like the game.

Sincerely,
Matthew Wagner

THE GAME

Here is a group activity I call "Ring around the Circle."

Tell your students to write a short fun command, which can be acted out in class, on a small piece of paper. Explain to them that it should be kept secret from the other students. Before they start to write, try to encourage them to make up creative commands by putting a few examples on the board, like "Sing a song," "Stand on your head," or "Hop around the room."

What you need for the second phase of the game is simply a ring (a janitorial type key ring is fine) and a plain clothesline about twenty feet long. Put the string through the ring, and tie the ends together to make a circle. Now you are ready to play.

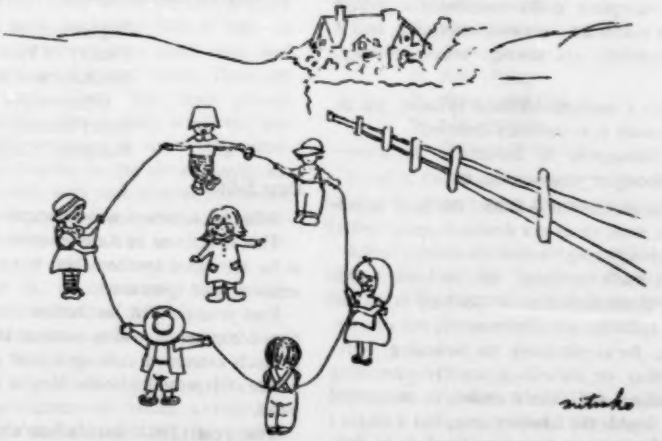
Organize about fifteen students into the shape of a circle. Then, tell them to take hold of the string with both hands. Have one of the students stand in the center of the circle. Next, explain that the object of the game is for the student in the center to find the ring. Point out at the beginning where the ring is on the string. Whoever has the ring should hide it under one of his hands.

After that, instruct the students holding the string to start moving their hands horizontally back and forth until you tell them to stop. It is fun to play a song during the time intervals.

The game begins as the first student passes the ring as inconspicuously as he can in either direction on the string. Be sure to explain the rule that the ring must be moving at all times during the time intervals from 15 to 30 seconds.

The challenge is for the person in the middle of the circle to find the ring. He must carefully observe the movement of the ring so that when the time is up he can guess who has the ring. If he guesses correctly, the person with the ring must choose one of the commands and act it out—which is even more fun than playing the game. If he is incorrect, he must choose one of the commands to perform himself. Continue playing the game by selecting different students to find the ring.

I have experienced many enjoyable hours playing this game with my students, of all ages I might add. I hope you enjoy it, too.



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☆ U. S. GOVERNMENT PRINTING OFFICE : 1982—367-790/637

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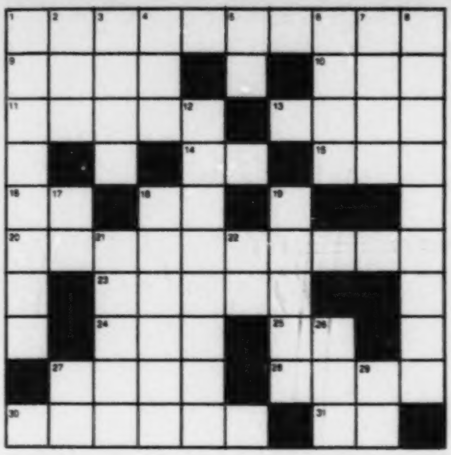
"The Lighter Side"



ACROSS

1 The science of mind and behavior
9 A device on which something flexible (string, wire, etc.) is wound; a spool for film or tape
10 American short-story writer and poet
11 In any way (usually used with a negative: not _____ _____ (two words)
13 Pointed instruments used for writing
14 Plural ending
15 A material made of string, cord, thread, etc., tied, twisted, or woven together; a device made of such material and used to catch fish; a fabric used to divide a court, as in tennis or volleyball
16 Preposition
18 South America (abbr.)
20 Teacher; trainer; educator
23 A form of a verb showing when the action occurs; stretched tightly; strained
24 A form of *to be*
25 A compass point; abbreviation of New England
27 A row or layer; one who ties
28 Not difficult
30 Gloomy; sullen; glum; depressed
31 Word used before a verb to indicate the infinitive

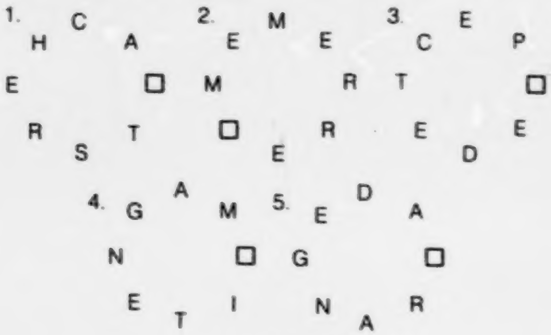
DOWN

1 What language learners need a lot of
2 Put in place; assign a time, price, etc.; fixed, established, firm; a group of related things; a division of a tennis match
3 Twelve months or 365 days
4 Community Language Learning (abbr.)
5 Alternative conjunction; correlative of *either*
6 Opposite of *closed*
7 Past participle of *go*
8 The day before today
12 Students
17 Preposition
18 Binaural (three-dimensional) sound system from reproduction of recorded material (phonograph records, tapes, etc.)
19 A picture or view; part of a play; the time and place at which an action occurs
21 One of a series of steps used in going up or down from one level to another
22 Pronoun
26 Consume; have a meal; take food into the body
27 In the direction of (and reaching toward); as far as
29 Thus; therefore; in order that; as a result; in such a way

Solution appears elsewhere in this issue.

WORD CIRCLES

Add the missing letter and get a word by starting at the right place and going around the circle.



ADD A LETTER

A. From each word below, make two new words by adding a letter (1) at the end; (2) at the beginning.

1. go_	3. arm_	5. hat_
_go	_arm	_hat
2. oil_	4. hear_	6. not_
_oil	_hear	_not

B. Form new words as in A (above). In addition, form a third word by adding a letter at the beginning *and* the end of the word.

1. at_	4. in_	7. ever_	10. all_
_at	_in	_ever	_all
_at_	_in_	_ever_	_all_
2. he_	5. on_	8. car_	11. ear_
_he	_on	_car	_ear
_he_	_on_	_car_	_ear_
3. an_	6. pin_	9. eight_	12. can_
_an	_pin	_eight	_can
_an_	_pin_	_eight_	_can_

SOLUTIONS

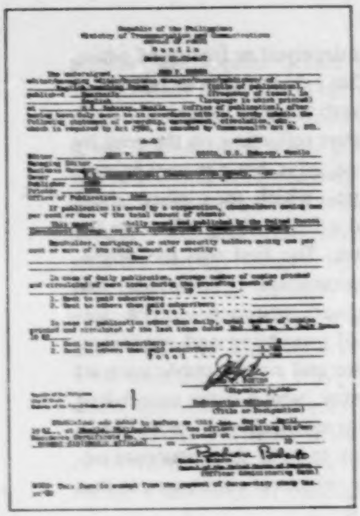
Word Circles: 1.teachers 2.remember 3.expected 4.magnetic 5.arranged

Add a Letter: (Note: These are only some of the possible answers; some other words could also be correct answers.)

A: 1.got; ago 2.oily; boil, soil, toil 3.army; farm, harm 4.heart; shear 5.hate; that, what, chat 6.note; knot

B: 1.ate; hat, cat, rat, mat, sat; late, rate, mate, hate 2.her, hen; she, the; then, when 3.and, any; may, can, pan, tan; cane, bank, want 4.ink; tin, pin; pint, tiny; line 5.one, ton, son; gone, tone 6.pint, pine, pink; spin; spine 7.every; never, sever, lever; severe 8.care, cart, card; scar; scare, scarf 9.eighty; weight, height; weighty 10.ally, wall, call, tall, fall, ball; tally, rally 11.earn; hear, tear, wear, year; learn, heart, weary, yearn 12.cane; scan; scant

3



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THE LIGHTER SIDE **inside back cover**

Volume XX
July 1982
Number 3

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Acknowledgments and copyright notices, when necessary, appear with the articles

Cover design
Graphichouse, Ltd.

For sale by the Superintendent of Documents, U.S. Government Printing Office
Washington, D.C. 20402

Reflections on the Past, the Present, and the Future

MARY FINOCCHIARO
Professor Emeritus
City University of New York

It was just fifty years ago–in 1932–that MARY FINOCCHIARO began her career teaching romance languages in the New York City schools. In 1940, she volunteered to teach English to a newly arrived group of students from nineteen countries. Her success in this undertaking led to the giving of public demonstration classes and to her appointment as Supervisor of Instruction for Non-English-Speaking Children in New York. Thus began a distinguished career in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages, one which has brought her into touch with thousands of teachers and students around the world as well as at Hunter College of the City University of New York, where she taught from 1957 until her retirement in 1972. For the past ten years, she has lived in Rome, continuing to travel widely and work indefatigably–lecturing, consulting, organizing, writing, helping–sharing her remarkable enthusiasm and expertise with teachers in Italy and in many other countries.

I hope that you will not feel deceived or frustrated when, despite the title, you find that I do not plan to talk about new hypotheses related to verb tense or aspect.

I should like instead to start reflecting on the past by recalling two events—one negative but not unexpected, the other decidedly positive—which took place about twenty years ago. Both had a far-reaching effect on the language-teaching profession. The first was the definitive turning away from structuralism, behaviorism, and its offspring the *audiolingual approach*—which followed nearly two decades of grumbling and confusion; the second was the fortunate and timely publication of the ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM, which in the succeeding twenty years has continued to aid teachers in more than a hundred and thirty countries to help their students acquire English, in spite of the vehement controversies that have raged around us.

From about 1963, slogans, hypotheses, and short-lived wonder methods have followed one another in quick succession. During these years, the FORUM has provided a reasonable, enlightened discussion of the conflicting points of view and has continued to espouse several principles that all practicing teachers could be aware of: (1) There are no really bad ideas in teaching: we can always find, within any theory or method, a nugget of information or a technique that will work with our personality and our students' learning strategies. (2) There should never be a question of adopting *in toto* one *or* another of seemingly conflicting notions, as for example, the cognitive-code theory *versus* habit formation; accuracy *versus* fluency; acquisition *versus* learning; contrastive analysis *versus* error analysis. Elements from both sides of these "opposing" pairs can be effective for many students at different stages of the learning process. (3) Throughout the history of language teaching, theories and methods have gone through a recurring cycle: development, arbitrary enforcement (particularly by the followers or "school" of a leader who—in all justice to him—may have set forth the idea tentatively), a brief period of enthusiasm—generally ten to twenty years—and rejection. (4) We cannot, we should not, ignore the achievements of the past. To do so would severely limit our view of current trends.

I will cite three episodes that underscore the last statement: (*a*) At a conference in 1975, the American psychologist John Carroll said: "It is sobering to read John Kelly's book *25 Centuries of Language Teaching* and to realize that what we think is new today was being done centuries ago in some part of the world." (*b*) Without using the exact words, Palmer (1917) repeated in the early twentieth century what Comenius had written in 1648: "Let us teach and learn: the few before the many; the short before the long; the simple before the complex; the general before the particular; the nearer before the more remote, the regular before the irregular" (Comenius 1657). Many of us would still subscribe to those precepts today. (*c*) Finally, a personal reflection: When I traveled to many areas of the world giving demonstration lessons, teachers would often come up to me and say, "Well, you can do it. You must be a born teacher." I would always answer, "Rubbish! One becomes a teacher by loving the students and the subject, by reading extensively in the field, as well as through trial and error, sweat and tears." They would persist and ask me for my secret, and I would tell them the truth: "I have not changed my basic teaching steps in fifty years except to add or delete a few devices or techniques in the practice stage." To their surprise, I would pull out a card on which I had noted Herbart's steps, written in the early 1800s, given to me by a professor of educational psychology over fifty years ago. As you read them, you will undoubtedly recognize that you use most of these same steps every day.

1. *Preparation:* review of familiar, relevant material.
2. *Presentation* (which Herbart called the *apperceptive mass*): examples of language in use and the discovery of rules by the learners.
3. *Association* of new and familiar material.
4. *Systematization:* generalization; recapitulation of new material in a context (see Kelly 1969: 312–14; Titone 1974).
5. *Application:* practice.

How else could I conclude these introductory remarks than by citing the French proverb "Plus ça change, plus c'est la même chose"—the more things change, the more they remain the same?

THEORIES AND METHODS IN THE TWENTIETH CENTURY

Many theories and methods favored at the turn of the century are still in use today in various parts of the world. Moreover, few theories and methods practiced in the past disappear completely. We improve them and discard the nonproductive features in them, but much remains that is integrated into a succeeding approach. To take a fairly recent example, we still utilize some facets of the audiolingual method with its emphasis on structural linguistics and behaviorist psychology. We have not done away with dialogues, but the ones we find in texts today are shorter and more lifelike. Moreover, we now make certain that learners comprehend the meaning of all utterances through pictures, gestures, dramatization, or native-language equivalents (in classes where all the learners understand the same language). We enable some students to remember some dialogue utterances through role-playing and other forms of dramatization but never through brute memorization. We still make time, where necessary, to do some pattern drills leading to habit formation, but utterances today are usually contextualized. We still believe—and recent research does not disprove this—that a student response that is rewarded by the teacher is reinforced and therefore learned, while negative teacher reaction or feedback is generally detrimental to learning. (This was a basic theory of Skinner [1957], the "father" of behaviorism.)

One of the problems I have in writing this brief survey is to select from the plethora of hypotheses, theories, and methods or techniques those that are more important and those that are less important. I shall mention those aspects of teaching theory and methods that I have used myself—with unsatisfactory or gratifying results—or which I have seen good teachers use effectively or poorly in some fifty countries. Among those that have made an impression on me—for a variety of reasons—are:

1. *The Gouin Method,* in which sequential actions are accompanied by utterances that describe the action being performed—first by the teacher and then by individual learners (Gouin 1880). This was quite effective with younger learners and is still in use today.

2. *The Direct Method,* in which chunks of language are taught in the target language. I loved it as a student of French because I had a superb teacher. However, to many learners, especially older ones, the excessive preoccupation with pronunciation and intonation, the time often spent in getting a meaning across, and the tension caused by the exclusive use of the target language were frustrating. Nevertheless, except where teacher aides and a vast collection of objects and pictures are available, the Direct Method—or the newer Graded Direct Method—is the only feasible approach in countries like the United States, Great Britain, and Israel, where the learners come from numerous linguistic backgrounds.

3. *Basic English* (Ogden 1934; Richards 1943), which I was forced to use for two years in the New York City schools. In Basic, language is simplified to include only sixteen verbs and eight hundred content words. The tasks students were asked to perform (e.g., Use these words to write a correct sentence: *I basket with go the to park a*) were time-wasting puzzles, and did not lead to even the suspicion of interaction or communication. I decided to change my job when the supervisor told me I had committed a felony because I had taken out my mirror and said "mirror" in order to teach "a glass for looking."

4. *The Grammar-Translation Method.* This has been with us through the centuries and is still with us. I hear it used all around me in my work assignments. In this, again, there are excesses that are deplorable. Only the deductive approach to grammar learning is used. In German, I memorized the rule, "*aus, bei, mit, nach,* etc., take the dative," but I never heard or produced an example with any of those prepositions! Translations of meaningless sentences were found in texts, as for example *The*

pen of my grandfather is on the dresser of my grandmother, and *The ice is hot*. These exaggerations are the fault not only of the textbook writers but also of teachers who are afraid to use their intuition and common sense to modify and adapt the presentation of the rules and practice activities in a method or text in fashion.

5. *The Reading Method* (primarily in the United States and Canada). In the late '20s, people concerned with education began to realize that few students graduating from high school or even college spoke any foreign language correctly and fluently. A commission of American and Canadian educators headed by Professor Coleman prepared a report (Coleman 1929) in which they stated that research and observation indicated that no one could learn to understand or use the spoken language in the limited time for language study given in schools. They recommended that the reading skill be emphasized, and that only the grammatical structures found in the reading selections be presented, primarily to ensure recognition. Instead of grammar texts, readers were used, containing original or simplified and adapted stories. If the books selected were interesting and at their reading level, many of the students derived a positive feeling of achievement from the Reading Method. It is interesting to note that in the last decade the market has again been flooded with simplified readers at "1000 word" or "1500 word" levels, etc. (based on the West or another reading list). In some instances, the words may be simple but the sentences in which they are embedded are quite complex and therefore difficult for students to decode.

6. *Structuralism, Behaviorism, and the Audiolingual Method*. The Second World War brought with it in the United States the realization that military personnel who would be serving overseas could not understand or speak any foreign language. Intensive, total-immersion language courses were launched as an immediate remedy for the situation. The work of Leonard Bloomfield (1933, 1942) in linguistics, Edward Sapir (1925, 1949) in cultural anthropology, and B.F. Skinner in psychology was used as the basis for materials preparation. Structuralism, behavioristic psychology, and the audiolingual method dominated the American scene until about 1960, when the first complaints (which had been felt by many) were voiced aloud. The whispers soon became a roar, particularly after the publication of Chomsky's two books on transformational grammar (Chomsky 1957, 1963) and his criticism of Skinner's work (Chomsky 1959).

In the audiolingual approach, the structuralists, and consequently textbook writers, emphasized the formal properties of language (the oral and written forms of nouns, verbs, etc.) which students had to learn in order to encode and decode speech, whether or not they understood the meanings of the individual words or of the spoken message they were to convey. These were the years Lewis Carroll's "Jabberwocky" was quoted ad infinitum to indicate that any student could understand structural meaning if he understood the formal *signals* of language (e.g., the fact that *the* signaled a following noun, or that *-ed* attached to a word generally signaled the simple past, or, with an auxiliary, the past participle or the passive voice). While this was true, it brought learners no closer to comprehending what was being said. The methodologists of those years underscored, too, the necessity of *overlearning*—a principle that led to endless mimicry and memorization ("miming and memming"). They believed also in presenting the pronunciation of words by means of minimal pairs, even though few students knew some of the obscure words that often made up these pairs.

The overlearning, the attention to form, and the daily exhaustion of teachers after five or six classes using the audiolingual method still did not produce large numbers of learners who could communicate with either the teacher, their peers, or native speakers of English.

7. *Transformational Theory and Cognitivism*. Despite the Chomskyan "revolution" and the attention to cognitive psychology that grew from it (and has since gone far beyond it), no real method has emerged from the generative-transformational theory. This was in part Chomsky's own wish when he announced that his theory referred primarily to native speakers and not to second- or foreign-language learners and that his theory could make no contribution to language teaching. While his statements are true, there are several aspects of his theory that have been adopted by practicing teachers and researchers; for example, (1) the concept that a language makes infinite use of finite means (depending on the language, thirty phonemes can enable its speakers to say anything they want to in that language);[1] (2) learners should be helped to interpret ambiguous sentences (e.g., *Flying planes can be dangerous*) by learning to recognize the kernel (deep or base) structures from which they are derived; (3) by the same token, sentences that look alike on the surface but are derived from different kernel sentences should be practiced separately with appropriate words in the sentence slots, as, for example, Chomsky's pair, *John is eager to please* and *John is easy to please*.

On the other hand, Chomsky's notion of creativity has been misunderstood by many teachers, who expect imaginative ideas and utterances to spring full-blown from their learners' minds after one week of learning at the junior high-school level. Misunderstanding of his notions that all human beings are born with a Language Acquisition Device in their brain and that all languages contain universal categories has led to the erroneous beliefs that (1) learners can acquire language effortlessly and (2) we need to teach only what is *not* universal. The truth of the matter is quite different: (1) second- or foreign-language learning is a long, arduous process that depends on cognitive and numerous personality and affective factors as well as on stimulating, effective teaching; (2) the "universal negative," for example, is expressed in different forms and positions in nearly all languages.

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[1] 1. This principle had been recognized for many years but never before stated in such definitive terms.

The *cognitive-code theory* is nothing more than the old well-known *inductive approach* in which learners are given examples (models) of language in a context or a situation and then are helped to discover the rules or generalizations that underlie the structure or communicative expression embodied in them. Despite the fact that this information has been available for centuries, many articles continue to speak endlessly about the *cognitive-code* theory versus the *habit-formation* theory.

Good teachers today, as in the past, follow the "cognitive-code theory," that is, the inductive presentation of a linguistic item or category, with tasks and activities that will lead to habit formation of features of pronunciation, morphology, and syntax—which will, in turn, lead to fluency and accuracy. By loosening controls and encouraging students to emit spontaneous utterances from the repertoire of linguistic items they have stored in their memories, good teachers have always led their students to the kind of interaction and communication in class that duplicates communication in the real world. Today, however, the majority of teachers and texts focus more specifically on social communication as the major objective of language teaching.

8. *Communication Theory, Sociolinguistics, and Humanistic Psychology*. While the United States was concerned about what to put in the place of the audiolingual approach, France was using and exporting the *audiovisual method*, which made extensive use of filmstrips and tape recorders or cassettes, while many teachers and textbook writers in Great Britain were advocating the *situational method*. Both methods had their ardent followers and their denigrators. Again, however, both methods could have been and were used to good effect by teachers who had the courage to adapt and to transfer the newly learned material to social situations other than those in which it was initially presented and, above all, to follow their own intuitions in modifying the methods to suit *their* teaching styles and *their students'* learning styles.

It was, however, at about the time that the Audiolingual Method was declared nonviable that sociolinguists, Hymes (1964, 1972) in the United States and Halliday (1973) in England, began speaking and writing about the importance of semantics and of a theory of communication. These theories, together with humanistic psychology, which underscored the importance of man-as-person rather than man-in-general (Nuttin 1968), and of affective factors and personality traits in learning (Maslow 1970), gave rise to a gamut of hypotheses, methods, approaches, and techniques. Limitations of space will not allow me to go beyond making three brief statements about semantics, communicative theory, and humanistic psychology. (See the bibliography at the end of this article for more extensive treatments.) Attention to semantics gives the learner a variety of behavioral, linguistic, and paralinguistic alternatives (gestures, sounds, stance, etc.) to convey a message. Attention to communicative theory enables the learner to realize that since every speech act takes place in a specific social situation, he must be aware of the people (number, age, sex, roles, status, personality, etc.), the place, the time, and the topic, in order to determine whether he will need to use a colloquial, informal, or formal variety of English in communicating with his interlocutor(s). Moreover, appropriateness and acceptability of speech in the particular social situation are as important as accuracy of pronunciation or grammar, if not more so. Humanistic psychology has brought back the pivotal importance of motivation and personality factors in language learning and the necessity for making the learner feel valued by teacher and peers in the classroom.

The objective of second-language teaching has become the development of communicative competence, including as it does the central role of appropriateness and acceptability of the speech act in the particular sociocultural situation in which it is said. While many teachers are using an eclectic approach—presenting grammar, situation, and topic as they did in the past but adding numerous communicative tasks and small-group or paired activities to the presentations—others have decided to adopt a *functional notional* approach, which is designed to lead to communicative competence from the first day of learning.

The *functional-notional* approach was the work of representatives of the countries in the Council of Europe, whose original purpose was to prepare material for adult "guest workers." The project is now being expanded to include all interested nations, all age levels, all levels of instruction, and a number of languages. The functional-notional, or communicative, approach integrates communication theory, attention to grammar, to semantics, to situation, and to humanistic psychology. In addition to the fact that the material has undergone wide experimentation, the project has the unusual merit of incorporating a unit-credit system in its curricular plan: persons who have studied particular functions of language, structures, units, or specific notions (vocabulary items) will be given credit in receiving school systems no matter which textbooks they have used.[2]

Several other methods have sprung up in the United States. However, some of these do not embody the principles found in the functional-notional or other communicative approaches, nor have full courses in such methods been made available in which teachers could "see" communication—if not on the first day, at least at the end of 150 or 200 hours. Moreover, in some cases, success depends on very small classes. We will have to wait for further enlightenment about these methods.[3]

The '70s also witnessed the birth and early demise of *performance objectives;* of *competency-based education;* of *teacher accountability* followed by that rather intimidating grid form known as *interaction analysis*, in which teachers' activities had to be checked by the teacher himself, an observer, or a videotape recorder every three(!) seconds during the lesson. The '70s are also remembered as the years when "relevance" and "focus on the learner" were the battle cries of persons who, without having spent time in the classroom, wrote erudite books on how the teacher should "move out of the way and make space for the learners." As McKim (1972) states so aptly, "only the teacher can make a class really learner centered and learner oriented!" Alas, only a few voices were raised in defense of the teacher. But we know that the teacher is and always has been "the crucial variable" in the learning process, throughout all the centuries of language teaching (Finocchiaro 1974).

PROBLEMS: WILL THEY ALWAYS BE WITH US?

The rapid shifts in theory and the pendulum swings in methodology would have been enough to frustrate the conscientious teachers working—and often functioning superbly—in difficult circumstances. To add to their difficulties, however, are the problems that always seem to be with us despite the pleas and protests of interested educators and citizens' committees. I will mention several briefly.

1. New hypotheses bring with them new terms, which are seldom explained or illustrated adequately in the articles or texts in which they appear. *Input, intake, output, monitor, exponent, transaction* (e.g., an expected conversational exchange with a waiter in a restaurant), *negotiation, information gap, fossilization* (persistence of a language error because it has not been corrected), *channel*, etc.—very often expressing different meanings depending on who uses them—come to us from business, the stock market, television, computers, the military, and mathematics. No one will deny that we have expanded our vocabulary; but will this expansion bring with it more sensitivity to learning problems and increased awareness of ways to overcome them?

2. Many research studies do not emphasize sufficiently the *sociocultural situation* in which the research was conducted, the *number of learners* involved (I cannot quite see how two "subjects" can constitute a research study of wide interest to teachers), or the *age of the learners*—an important factor in language learning. Moreover, the language in which they are reported contains terms used in psychological testing that are unknown to many teachers and to the general, educated, interested public. To be of benefit to *any* interested reader, research should be reported in comprehensible terms.

Furthermore, much reported research does not seem to have had the benefit of collaboration with classroom teachers who live with the daily realities of the teaching situation. Unfortunately, these same teachers will be asked by supervisors and ministry personnel to implement the research findings, which have often been rushed into print prematurely.

3. In many countries, universities have no undergraduate teacher-training program; nor do they give courses in English leading to an English major. Even in countries where there is a teacher-training program, the university professor may never have taught at the elementary or secondary-school levels or—worse still—may never have visited a class. Many statements heard and learned at the university are so far removed from reality that young teachers often feel lost when they are catapulted into a teaching situation with a poor command of the target language and with little or no knowledge of the learning or teaching process.

4. The situation just described is also true of many textbook writers, who could facilitate the teacher's task by visiting classes or talking to teachers. Few teachers' manuals discuss the language (native or target—with or without teacher aides or native speakers of either language) in which motivations, situations, instructions, or other essential lesson components should be given. Nor are sentences (or utterances) in student texts organized and graded logically—for example, concentrating on one difficulty at a time. The conscientious teacher is forced to renumber the utterances with different colored pencils in his or her book in order to give concerted rather than haphazard practice when teaching new structural categories or language functions.[4]

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[2] All Council of Europe material is now being made available to the general public. Texts by Chancerel, Richterich, van Ek, Wilkins, John Trim (Project Director), and others, are available from Pergamon Press, Oxford, England.

[3] Quite apart from these more recent approaches, we should not neglect to mention the development during the '60s and '70s of *programmed learning* materials designed for self-study, in which the linguistic items were graded in small incremental steps to facilitate acquisition. Students using these materials learned immediately—through a prearranged electronic signal or some typographical device—whether or not their responses in the drills were correct.

[4] Where classroom lessons are followed by laboratory practice in which the textbook order is reproduced, the teacher will have to familiarize the learners with the original random order *before* students go to the laboratory.

5. English as a *foreign* language and English as a *second* language present quite different problems in the classroom. Such factors as out-of-class language stimuli, age of the learners, time needed to learn, and numerous others, all have to be taken into account by teachers and administrators. The chart on page 8 points up some factors. The number of variables in COMET, as you can see, is mind-boggling.

PROMISING DEVELOPMENTS

I should like to turn our attention now to brighter vistas discernible all around us. Most important, I think, is the fact that in every corner of the globe a spirit of professionalism among teachers is on the rise. Whereas five years ago about a hundred people might be expected to attend a national educational conference, today one to two thousand teachers flock to seminars, workshops, and colloquia devoted to some aspect of teaching and learning. In addition to paying for their transportation, food, and lodging—a sacrifice for poorly paid teachers in some parts of the world—many teachers now submit papers for presentation at the conference. The idea of collective action, of sharing, and keeping abreast of innovations has finally taken hold.

This is such a positive phenomenon that it cannot but bring about a transformation in what happens between students and teachers and between teachers and supervisors, and in the impact education will have on the community and society.

Well-worn concepts are being aired again. New ones are being created. Some key words and phrases, like *motivation, personality, interdisciplinary,* and *cultural pluralism,* as well as formerly "taboo" words like *translation* and *the use of the native language,* are regaining respectability. Let us take a brief look at several of these words and phrases that appear frequently in learning or teaching materials, bearing in mind that the line of demarcation between affective and cognitive factors is no longer clear-cut. Factors in both domains interact, depending on the surrounding "world" and on inherent cultural structures within the individual.

1. *Motivation* is no longer thought of only as integrative or instrumental. It is again considered a key to learning, created, fostered, and maintained by the enthusiastic, sensitive, well-prepared classroom teacher at every stage of the learning process, as he or she meets the students' basic needs. The universal needs identified by the psychologist Maslow are: survival (and security), belonging, identity, self-esteem, and self-actualization. Procedures that can become a part of every lesson and which will help students develop these positive affective feelings include: (*a*) relating the presentation and practice of any communicative or linguistic item or the reading and writing of any "text" to their native language and culture and to their probable experience in their native land or their new environment; (*b*) encouraging them to speak of their native culture in English or in their native tongue, where feasible; (*c*) making sure that they comprehend every dialogue utterance, the gist of the reading passage, instructions for tasks and activities, and cultural allusions in a listening or reading passage; (*d*) giving them extensive practice in using verbal or—if necessary—nonverbal alternatives for communicative expressions, structures, or language items; (*e*) rotating their participation in groups according to their academic needs or their evolving interests; (*f*) engaging them in paired practice activities for a good part of each lesson; (*g*) correcting important errors tactfully by rephrasing a question, expanding an answer, or by merely saying, "Listen," and giving the correct answer; (*h*) announcing all tests in advance and indicating clearly what the content of the test may include; (*i*) letting them either grade their own papers or do so with a partner; (*j*) showing concern for school or community problems of individuals; (*k*) helping them appreciate their own language and culture—thus retaining their sense of belonging and identity; (*l*) making it possible for them to enjoy many small successes and a feeling that they are making definite—even if slow—progress toward their goals. Every lesson step, every class or out-of-class task or activity, can be designed to enhance motivation.

2. The importance of *personality* has gained currency in the last decade. While the neo-behaviorist psychologists still agree that language is a form of behavior, they see speech as a mediated response to stimuli—as an activity that directs and transforms the behavioral function and restructures the cognitive processes. Personality influences speech, which in turn influences personality. Nuttin (1968) postulated that personality is a mode of functioning involving the ego and the world. It is an open-ended system that relates an individual's internal structure (affective, verbal, perceptive, cognitive) to the outside environment—physical, social, and cultural. Verbal communication is an expression of the individual's internal and external personality.

Teaching approaches emphasize the central role of language as a social phenomenon. Students are engaged in realistic communicative activities that make use of the tentative type of language that leads to more harmonious interpersonal relationships in social situations.[5]

3. *Global Education*. The above remarks bring us to an emerging study termed *global education*. This concept transcends that of cultural pluralism, which includes a sensitive perception and appreciation of cultures be-

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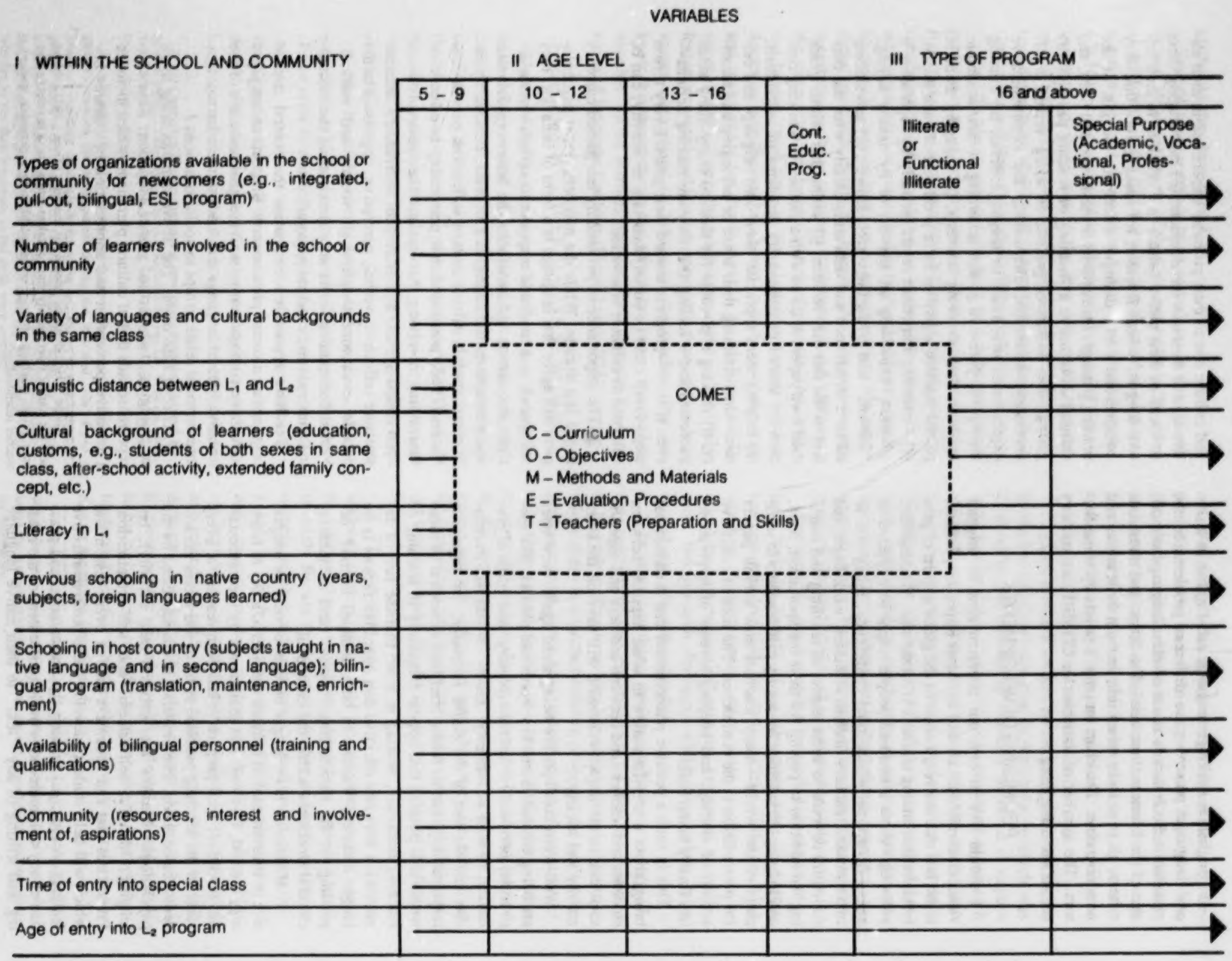
[5] Titone's Holodynamic Model for teaching (Titone 1981) shows how the learner's personality must be taken into account in selecting an appropriate teaching strategy or in establishing a desirable student-teacher relationship.



VARIABLES

I WITHIN THE SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY	II AGE LEVEL			III TYPE OF PROGRAM		
	5 – 9	10 – 12	13 – 16	16 and above		
				Cont. Educ. Prog.	Illiterate or Functional Illiterate	Special Purpose (Academic, Vocational, Professional)
Types of organizations available in the school or community for newcomers (e.g., integrated, pull-out, bilingual, ESL program)						
Number of learners involved in the school or community						
Variety of languages and cultural backgrounds in the same class						
Linguistic distance between L_1 and L_2						
Cultural background of learners (education, customs, e.g., students of both sexes in same class, after-school activity, extended family concept, etc.)						
Literacy in L_1						
Previous schooling in native country (years, subjects, foreign languages learned)						
Schooling in host country (subjects taught in native language and in second language); bilingual program (translation, maintenance, enrichment)						
Availability of bilingual personnel (training and qualifications)						
Community (resources, interest and involvement of, aspirations)						
Time of entry into special class						
Age of entry into L_2 program						

COMET

C – Curriculum
O – Objectives
M – Methods and Materials
E – Evaluation Procedures
T – Teachers (Preparation and Skills)

yond that of the target language. Global education, already a discipline in its own right in several universities, is interdisciplinary, embracing several universal goals: (*a*) to help students understand the ways of thinking, the values, and the problems of other peoples; i.e., to develop cross-cultural awareness; (*b*) to enable students to analyze and suggest measures for using and sharing the earth's resources; (*c*) to develop a spirit of kinship with other peoples, since humanity shares a common future; (*d*) to make students aware of the choices they can make in order to consider themselves citizens of the world.

Bilingualism and biculturalism are not sufficient for living and participating in today's interdependent world. It is our responsibility to prepare our learners to cope not only with the world's universal problems and "behaviors" but with its many ethnic and cultural systems.

4. *Communicative Competence* is the principal objective in the majority of second or foreign-language teaching programs. The *linguistic competence* demanded in the past asked for (but seldom attained) the mastery of features of pronunciation, grammar, lexicon, and culture. "Communicative competence," on the other hand, asks that most teachers be satisfied with a "reasonable" knowledge of those same features. It considers it imperative, however, that students learn to use language appropriately in the social situation in which the speech act takes place.

This objective has brought with it a change in some of the subsidiary objectives that were part of the goal of linguistic competence: (*a*) the *use* of the learners' native language is permitted—and indeed encouraged—to explain, for example, those elements in the social situation that may require a more formal variety of language; to clarify instructions; to compare or contrast grammatical or communicative expressions in the first and second languages; and, above all, to help students retain their pride in their native tongue and culture; (*b*) it is now taken for granted that in many circumstances, particularly where English is learned as a *foreign* language, we will accept the fact that the majority of adolescent or adult learners will speak, for example, an Indian, an Italian, or a German English; (*c*) translation (giving the native- or target-language equivalent of contextualized communicative expressions, structures, and—at the upper level—passages) is again being used in many countries where all the learners in the class are from one ethnic background; (*d*) the internal coherence of conversational exchanges and of other types of discourse has become a matter of concern and study; (*e*) the exchange of meanings—that is, the purposes or intentions of the interlocutors or writers (what they want to do or express through language)—has become the core of language-learning activities and tasks; (*f*) fluency *and* accuracy are both goals of language learning. Indeed, many psycholinguists and sociolinguists would place fluency above accuracy. As Pit Corder (1981) stated in a recent address, "Fluency is for all learners; accuracy, for some; absolute accuracy, for few."

5. *The role of grammar* has been sadly misunderstood in the last few years. Not long ago I was invited to give a one-hour talk on the subject "Is Grammar Out?" I said simply, "Of course not," and sat down. I immediately rose again, however, to add, "There is no grammarless language"; then I went on to explain what I saw as some of the changes that the communicative approach had brought to the role of grammar. Here are a few of them: (*a*) The grammar presented generally *follows from* the communicative message (that is, the *function* of language that is being expressed); for example, in making a request with *Would you mind* I should present or focus on the grammatical structure *present participle + -ing*. (*b*) A *spiral approach* is used in the presentation and practice of any grammatical category. Depending on the age of the learners, a week, a month, or a year might elapse before the students are asked to study actively the present perfect with *for* and *since*. (They might have learned the structure for recognition prior to that.) (*c*) Internal gradation is important, however, if the students are to understand and actively use a structural item. Before being presented with the structure mentioned in (*b*) above, the learners should know personal pronouns, the verb *have*, some regular and irregular past participles, and concepts of time. The present perfect, however, could have been introduced in a frequently used question such as *Have you seen X?* (a TV show, a movie, a person, etc.) from the second week of language learning at all levels, except perhaps in elementary schools, where many children are still learning their standard native language.

6. *Presuppositions* are the "real world" experiences that people engaging in a conversation should have shared—or at least learned about—if full comprehension of their meaning is to occur. Unless the context and the situation are crystal clear (really unambiguous), it may be wiser to avoid time-wasting guessing games in which students hear only "What do you think it is?" followed by a one-word answer and the teacher's "No, it's not." If a presupposition is important for comprehension and for continuing the conversation, the teacher should explain it immediately, returning to it in greater depth when necessary. By the same token, paralinguistic features of language behavior, such as unarticulated sounds and hesitation or transitional words, are part of normal conversation and should be used and practiced in role plays, paired practice, and other relevant activities.

7. *Literature* is being recommended for early levels of language learning. Some will object, but I approve wholeheartedly. Learning simple poems, plays, and sim-

plified versions of classics in English gives students a much-needed feeling of achievement. When I was teaching in Turkey, a guest lecturer at a teachers' seminar brought, explained, and read aloud a four-page English adaptation of Victor Hugo's *Les Misérables*. There wasn't a dry eye in the room when she had finished, and everyone hoped to be able to read the unabridged English translation as soon as possible. *There* was built-in motivation such as I had rarely witnessed!

8. The term *interdisciplinary* has several meanings, each of which is important: (*a*) our theoretical background for language teaching and learning should include a knowledge of linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, semantics, communication theory, and didactics; (*b*) in order to enhance motivation, the teacher of English as a foreign or second language should use concepts, terms, and techniques from every area in the curriculum the learners are studying. This will give students an opportunity to talk, ask, and write about topics with which they have some familiarity. An interdisciplinary approach is particularly important in the English as a *second* language situation, enabling language learners to get into the mainstream of the school and to function on a par with their classmates as quickly as possible.

Indeed, Burt and Dulay (1981) have recently recommended the teaching of a school subject in English to serve as a natural bridge to English-language learning. I agree wholeheartedly.[6]

9. *Acquisition*. Until a few years ago, language acquisition and language learning were used interchangeably. In studies by Krashen (1981) and others, a distinction has been made between the two terms: *learning* is used to describe what the student learns in a formal school situation (primarily *about* language); *acquisition*, what a person learns unconsciously from the varied stimuli (the input) he receives from the world around him. Several misconceptions have arisen and still exist as this is written: (*a*) It was thought that acquisition was more effective than learning; now, learning is recommended for beginning levels. (*b*) It was thought that learning referred primarily to the internalization of grammatical rules, and that through learning, the speaker could monitor his speech (listen to himself to edit his speech—that is, to obtain feedback) and thus correct himself either before or after he made an error. I have not found this true either as a teacher or as a learner; although I *acquired* Spanish, I can generally correct my own errors in the language. Nor is it necessarily true that fluency is due to what we have *acquired*. In thousands of classes throughout the world, fluency has also been achieved in a *learning* situation.

Closely allied to the above are two interesting points made by Krashen (1981) and Dulay and Burt (1979): (*a*) Both in first- and second-language learning, there is a natural *order* of learning morphological phenomena (e.g., it is easier for learners to acquire the present with *-ing* than to internalize the third person singular); this seems to be true across cultures that have been studied up to now, and at similar age levels. (*b*) *Affective filters* (negative emotional and personality factors) can block the input that one could otherwise get from the inborn Language Acquisition Device; the implication is that teachers should keep affective filters as low (as weak) as possible so as not to inhibit learning (Burt and Dulay 1981).

ISSUES FOR RESEARCHERS

It is obvious that much more research and experimentation with widely diverse populations is required to transform some hypotheses to sound theories that teachers feel they can live with. The following are some of the principal problems that require more definitive answers:

1. The significant differences between learning and acquisition.

2. The Monitor Theory (Stevick's 1980 questions and diagram seem pertinent).

3. Needs analysis. A great deal of time is being spent on this issue, particularly with respect to adults. What about children and adolescents? Since their needs are generally neither foreseeable nor predictable, what should be included in the language curriculum (*a*) that they would find relevant in their present learning situation and (*b*) that would give them the potential and incentive to continue to learn that language (or another) later in life?

4. The sequence and timing of skill acquisition. Some researchers feel that speaking should be deferred (Postovsky 1981); some, that reading should be started early (Lado 1981). (I would agree with starting reading early, particularly when the L_1 and L_2 writing systems are the same. But what if the L_1 has no writing system, so that the learners have never read in their own language? Should the four basic skills be integrated from the outset? Which should precede the other? Why?

5. Students' learning styles and strategies. While some promising research is in progress, much more needs to be done across different cultures and age groups. Assuming that we do succeed in identifying all possible learning styles and strategies (do learners have one or more than one? in which circumstances? etc.), the important question is: what will teachers, curriculum designers, and textbook writers do to match the strategies and styles to tasks and activities generally found in teachers' manuals or textbooks? Individualize instruction, use many media, group, or—?

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[6] You may also wish to read Tucker's article on alternative modes of presenting bilingual programs (Tucker 1981).

6. Can the language laboratory be integrated effectively with classroom work? When? How? I think it can; I have seen it done.

7. How does effective teaching lead to effective learning? What characteristics in learners and teachers make the difference? How important is the textbook? When is grading of material essential?

8. Two longitudinal studies conducted in the United States indicated that learners generally learn what they are taught; that no one method is superior to another (Scherer and Wertheimer 1964; Smith 1970). What then are the variables that make a major difference in learning in a formal school situation?

9. Are formative tests useful? In which circumstances? How often?

10. Is distant (autonomous) learning superior to school learning? When? For whom? How could autonomous learning be made effective?

Issues for research studies are many and varied. I would urge that the above questions be made a matter of concern to psychologists, linguists, sociolinguists, curriculum designers, and others who are interested. I would urge, however, that results *not* be published until the experimentation on which they are based has been replicated in similar or entirely different circumstances.

WHAT COULD THE YEAR 2000 HOLD FOR US?

Many guideposts point the way to a healthy optimism for the years to come. Some indications perceptible today can only continue to improve:

1. University departments and private foundations throughout the world are engaged in research on the myriad issues related to learning and teaching. It is to be fervently hoped that, in the future, (*a*) the practicing classroom teacher will be asked to contribute his or her practical know-how to relevant research models, and (*b*) the following basic questions will be given marked attention in the planning stages: *Who* will conduct the research? *For whom* are the results intended? *Where* will the research take place? *When* and *how often* will the results be evaluated? *Why* is this research or experiment being carried out? *Why* might this experiment *not* be valid in these or other circumstances?

2. The current emphasis on language as a social phenomenon will open the way to widespread communicative language-learning approaches at all school levels. The focus on the social purposes of language will ensure that interaction among persons in a society and across societies will become more harmonious and more significant as the use of clear but polite language in both the native and the second language is taught and practiced in schools in meaningful, interesting social situations.

3. Organizations such as UNESCO, the Center for Applied Linguistics, the Association for International Development, the U.S. International Communication Agency, and the British Council—to mention but a few—as well as national and international teachers' associations throughout the world, will continue to collaborate in the numerous "helping people" or "training teachers" projects. Peoples everywhere should be enabled to appreciate that English is fast becoming the lingua franca of the entire world and that English will serve many other purposes besides being an instrument of interaction with its native speakers.

As the world becomes more interdependent, as cultural and scientific exchanges involving attendance at international conferences, the reading of papers at such conferences, the subscription to journals in many fields, and international cooperation on projects of mutual concern increase, a knowledge of English will be needed by many more people who want to be involved in the latest worldwide developments related to their vocations or interests.

Much more needs to be done, however, before we can complacently feel that "all is for the best in the best of all possible worlds." I see the following as priorities for the very near future:

1. Language teaching will always remain an art in the hands of enthusiastic, competent, caring teachers, but it must become a respected science in its own right. The learning process may well remain a mystery for years to come, but the teaching process can be described, set forth in detail, and its results evaluated objectively. I do not mean that teaching should become inflexible. The teaching process must still make provision for the teacher's personality and the learners' learning strategies. It must still consider the aims of particular societies and their resources or lack of resources in specific communities. But, even keeping all of these factors in mind, we can still delineate what should be done first; what can be taught with what; how we can proceed from one item or subsidiary skill to the next; which communicative abilities should be deferred or taught early, or stressed continuously (such as listening and reading comprehension). All of these questions should be the subject of intensive and extensive research, with linguists, psychologists, sociologists, educators, and classroom teachers collaborating to produce viable, feasible, practical answers.

2. Pre-service training programs must be built into all college and university programs in order to prepare future teachers for the sensitive, complex task they face. In-service programs should be offered (*a*) automatically every five or six years to keep teachers abreast of new developments in the field, and (*b*) whenever an innovative curriculum, a new type of text, or unfamiliar equipment (e.g., a language laboratory or overhead projector) is to be introduced. In-service training can be offered by

the university, by the staff of the Ministry of Education, by professional organizations, or by a consortium of all three.

Whoever is charged with the training should remember that we are teaching human beings with varied experiences, personalities, and learning strategies. These individuals have come to us with a perfectly adequate language and culture which gives them a sense of identity and belonging. Our primary responsibility is to give them the feeling that we are adding a new language and an appreciation of other cultures—that we do not want to "take away" their language and culture.

3. Global education should be initiated in the elementary schools, since children are generally free of prejudices, false stereotypes, and ethnocentrism. Concepts begun in early school years should be deepened and reinforced throughout all the school years, using a spiral (cyclical) thematic approach in the social studies and in the native-language and foreign-language programs. When students have attained the maturity to profit fully from such an offering in upper secondary school, college, or university, a full semester's course involving them in individual or group research projects related to global similarities, differences, problems, etc., should be offered.

4. The teacher's crucial role in society must be stressed at teacher-training institutions, in meetings of parents and other interested members of the community. The importance that the community assigns to the teacher must be demonstrated—whenever necessary, justified, and possible—by making class sizes manageable, by providing a living wage, supplying in-service help, and providing such incentives as awards, promotions, scholarships, or travel grants. The unique opportunity of teachers to touch the minds, hearts, and souls of all the individuals in a society, and hence to change the community and improve the world, should be emphasized. Ministries of Education and heads of teachers' organizations should from time to time send encouraging circulars to teachers, as reminders that they are not forgotten, that they should retain a sense of commitment to their profession, and that they should develop their own fortes in order to sustain motivation in their learners.

I would recommend that centrally located teacher-resource centers be established in all cities. These should contain the latest texts for teachers and students, simple teacher- or pupil-made materials such as picture files, worksheets, or charts which teachers can duplicate, and anything else relevant in the particular community or country.

In conclusion, let me say, "Yes, miraculous changes can take place by the turn of the century." But I would add, with increased emphasis, a plea I made in 1974: "Despite the strides we have made in TESL or TEFL program objectives, moving—as we have—from a knowledge of grammar as a terminal objective, to the development of reading skills, to an emphasis on structure, to a concern for meaning, to the goal of communicative competence, to a search for truth in language, I should like to submit that communicative competence and truth may not be enough. Understanding and speaking a common language or stating the truth as one sees it do not necessarily lead to true communication. We have had ample evidence of this fact throughout history in civil wars and in the irrational persecutions of one's countrymen.

"We must have the courage to stop drilling or reading or whatever, and instead to take steps to help our students, from their earliest years, to *listen* to each other with attention and with interest; to *appreciate* differing points of view; to *respect* diversity; and to *question* their own values. Instead of expending all our efforts on extinguishing or rechanneling false linguistic analogies, let us change the direction of our teaching whenever and wherever necessary to extinguish or rechannel aggression, to help our students accept another's opinions and feelings, or to eradicate bigotry and prejudice.

"The world, our countries, our communities will survive with faulty pronunciation and less than perfect grammar, but can we be sure they will continue to survive without real communication, without a spirit of community, indeed without real *communion* among peoples? Part of the answer lies in the hands of everyone in our profession. Seeking the truth to that answer is a challenge we cannot, we dare not, refuse to accept."[7]

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International Exchange of Materials for Teaching

Are you interested in exchanging with an American teacher of your native language materials such as magazines, newspapers, product wrappers, album covers, phone books, catalogues, etc., appropriate for use in the language class? If so, you may send to the address below a fifty-word (or less) description of what you might offer in such an exchange and what you might expect in return. We hope that such offers will mark the beginning of a long and valuable exchange of materials for many teachers.

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What Every EFL Teacher Should Know about Reading

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Talk about communicative competence, which fills the air, has eclipsed attention to the competence required for reading well in a new language. Perhaps in reaction to its apparent association with the "old-fashioned" grammar-translation method, language teachers have turned away from the reading skill. But today, especially in language programs designed to meet specific needs, many teachers realize that the skill students need most is reading.

Reading is a multifaceted, complex skill made up of a number of psychological, physical, and social elements. Just as there are many sides to *knowing* a language, so there are many aspects to effective, mature reading. Unfortunately, in language pedagogy, too little attention is devoted to this skill. Too often language teachers have no opportunity to obtain even an overview of the vast amount of research that has been done on the reading process. The purpose of this article is to summarize some current understandings about the nature of reading and make them accessible to language teachers.

When we compare even third- and fourth-year English textbooks with unedited reading material in this language, we begin to realize the scope of the problem. Few students, even after years of study, are able to read English easily. The vocabulary and syntax of newsmagazines, novels, and nonfiction books seem quite beyond the reach of most students; yet these are the materials teachers want their students to read. Students must go beyond the language textbook if they are to achieve a level where they can read for the purpose of learning, let alone for pleasure and enjoyment.

By all measures, reading would seem to be the most attainable language skill for students in countries where English is not widely spoken. While it is almost impossible to achieve fluency in speaking without the opportunity to practice frequently with native speakers, reading requires only a text and a reader—and possibly a dictionary. For, unlike interaction with a native speaker, an author will wait while the reader looks up a new word here and there.

The fact that reading competence in a new language is an achievable goal should encourage teachers to turn their attention to developing reading programs that will help students move from controlled, contrived textbook prose into reading material that they select for themselves, according to their own interests and curiosity about the world. With a better understanding of the nature of the reading process, of mature reading strategies, and of what a reading-skill program should include, language teachers will be able to choose materials and activities that capitalize on their students' interests.

Three basic methods

The use of graphic symbols to represent meaning is a relatively recent invention in man's history. If the devel-

opment of the human species were plotted along a timeline representing a single year, we would find that mechanical printing began only a few minutes ago.[1] But in technological societies today a person without reading competence is severely limited; literacy is widely regarded as an essential tool for learning.

Learning to read is a process associated primarily with instruction in a student's first language; however, language teachers in adult literacy and some bilingual programs must have an understanding of the early, code-breaking, stage of reading. Discussions of methods to use in the earliest stage of reading instruction—at least in the United States—are numerous, and there is no striking evidence in favor of one approach over another. Each of the various methods, in what is sometimes called "the great debate," has its strong adherents.

The methods most widely used are (1) *phonics*, that is, instruction in the correspondence between English letters and sounds (also known as the "linguistic approach," particularly when the analysis of letter combinations and sounds is more precise); (2) *whole-word reading*, which involves recognition of single words representing objects or concepts well understood by the learners, and then moves into word groups; and (3) *the language-experience approach*, in which learners tell a brief story, or give a description or a comment, the teacher writes down the language they use, and the learners then read the language they have spoken.

Success, along with failures, seems to occur with all three approaches, as well as with combinations of them. Although there is no clear-cut evidence for one beginning-reading method over another, it has been noted that when children do grasp the knack of reading, the same basic elements are present—the three *m*'s of success in learning to read.

Maturation, motivation, and meaning

First, a level of cognitive *maturation* must be reached before a child is ready to read, although the age may vary widely. (The first *m* of learning to read may also stand for *mystery*, since no one really knows anything about what it is that triggers a child's grasp of the idea behind reading.) Second, *motivation* must be present: reading specialists point out the benefits of a rich reading environment, one in which other family members read and in which there are ample materials to read. The third *m* is *meaning*: the child must know, in terms of real-world experience, the content of the reading, or at least a good deal of it. After the child has broken the code, his reading skill should develop along with his cognitive abilities, if the three *m*'s of normal maturation (or growth), motivation, and meaning are present.

The third *m*, meaning, is particularly important for language teachers, who too often observe students reading word by word, trying to get meaning from individual words rather than from longer stretches of print. Reading specialists maintain that to become a mature reader it is necessary to move beyond deciphering letters and individual words, towards getting meaning from the printed page directly without decoding into spoken language.

What is mature reading?

Psycholinguistic descriptions of the reading process emphasize the need for active participation. This is in direct contrast to the old familiar notion of reading as a receptive skill. Following are three quotations from scholars concerned with reading in a second or foreign language, all of which stress that active interaction must take place between the writer of the text and the reader:

> Reading is a long-distance discussion between a reader and an author . . . there is an essential interaction between language and thought in reading . . . the writer encodes thought as language, and the reader decodes language to thought. (Goodman 1968)
>
> Reading is . . . not a reaction to a text, but an interaction between writer and reader mediated through the text . . . reading efficiency is a matter of how effective a discourse the reader can create from the text, either in terms of rapport with the writer or in terms of his purpose in engaging in the discourse in the first place. (Widdowson 1979)
>
> Reading is . . . an active process, in which the reader must make an active contribution by drawing upon and using concurrently various abilities he has acquired. (Wardhaugh 1969)

What are mature reading strategies?

Significant research has been directed toward identifying the strategies or techniques used by people who read well. Such strategies—which are numerous—seem to group themselves around the following core ideas:

1. *Adjusting Attention according to the Material*. Not all reading matter is the same: different types of material require different reading modes. Some selections should be read quickly without bothering about details; others require careful, deliberate attention. Good readers continually shift and adjust their attention according to the nature of the reading matter as well as their objectives.

2. *Using the Total Context as an Aid to Comprehension*. The meaning of a selection lies not only in those pages on which it appears, but in the total context of the book or periodical. Good readers use all of the front matter (the table of contents, title page, etc.), as well as the chapter and section headings, as quick aids to comprehension. In newspaper reading, for example, the position of an article in the paper (e.g., whether it appears in the news section or editorial pages) adds to the total context and provides information that helps to understand it.

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[1] See "The Cosmic Calendar," by Carl Sagan, in *The Dragons of Eden*, included in Dubin and Olshtain 1981.

3. *Skimming*. Reading quickly to get an overall idea of the subject matter of a selection is called skimming. The first, quick reading can be for the purpose of finding the main ideas of paragraphs or larger chunks of print. Newspaper writing lends itself to skimming, since the main ideas are contained in the lead paragraph; after the lead, everything else is details. Mature readers use the technique of skimming with all kinds of materials to determine whether an item deserves further attention.

4. *Search Reading*. A more attentive approach than skimming, search reading is usually appropriate for expository prose. The reader makes use of key words or groups of synonymous words and expressions which the author has utilized to avoid the fault of repeating the same word too often. The reader looks for repeated elements of all kinds that present no new ideas or themes. For example, much expository writing in popular journals contains elaborations in which the writer piles up many examples to illustrate a few main ideas. These are the passages to skip over quickly.

5. *Predicting/ Guessing/ Anticipating*. These three words describe what good readers do as their eyes quickly go down a page of print, picking up meanings in bunches, so to speak. On the word level, the reader guesses the meaning of unfamiliar words by using the context. On the syntactic level, he/she uses what he/she knows about the form of the language to extract meaning without actually reading all the words. The idea of a dialogue between author and reader is part of the process of predicting and anticipating. The reader tends to anticipate the author's words before he/she encounters them on the page.

6. *Critical Reading*. A more sophisticated form of predicting is reading critically, or reading "between the lines" by looking for the meaning behind the author's words. This involves strategies such as looking for inference, implication, tone of voice, etc.

7. *Receptive Reading*. Careful reading is called for when the reader needs to use the information, typically in a learning situation. In this kind of reading, associated primarily with information-dense material, the reader gives attention to the supporting ideas that back up arguments, and uses such strategies as reading paragraph by paragraph, summarizing the main ideas of each paragraph, underlining, making notes in the margin about questions to ask later, and writing a summary after reading in order to retain the material or make it his/her own.

8. *Scanning*. A strategy distinct from skimming, although sometimes confused with it, scanning involves looking for particular information, usually facts that one has read recently. One scans the pages of a newspaper to find a particular article. One scans the pages of a telephone directory or the index of a book looking for a particular item.

9. *Using Textual-Discourse Devices*. Effective readers make use of all the syntactic and rhetorical features the author has provided. Textual-discourse devices provide unity or coherence to a piece of writing. In narrative writing, for example, unity comes from a sequence of events set out in chronological order. In expository writing, unity is achieved through the words and phrases the writer employs to connect the ideas in sentences, paragraphs, and larger segments. The good reader makes use of this prescription to writers: "Tell the reader what you are going to say, say it, then tell him what you have said."

10. *Synthesizing Knowledge*. The most elusive, but probably most crucial, strategy is making use of previous knowledge. Even for extremely proficient readers, it is a tedious, difficult task to read about totally unfamiliar subject matter. In all reading, one should bring to the activity all of one's cultural knowledge and experience in the real world, to get sense from the printed page.

What should a foreign- or second-language reading-skill program provide?

Although the path from research output to classroom application is never direct, suggestions for a sound reading program can be drawn from what is known about the nature of the reading process and the strategies that effective readers use. At the same time, research provides valuable information against which activities traditionally associated with foreign- and second-language reading programs can be measured.

Perhaps most importantly, a reading program should give attention to the skill of reading alone and for its own sake. Practices such as having individuals read aloud, or choral reading in which the class reads aloud following the teacher's model, are questionable ways to teach the reading skill. Such activities do offer opportunities for *oral* practice, and teachers should view them as such, and not mix oral work with reading, since effective reading occurs without reference to the sounds of language.

A solid reading program should teach strategies explicitly, through intensive reading lessons appropriate to the developmental level of the students. For example, when reading is first introduced as a separate skill, attention should be given to word-attack activities such as finding word groups and phrases, guessing new words from local context clues, and finding main and supporting ideas.

Learners should be encouraged to use guessing and predicting strategies when they read, and teachers should support them in this activity. The teacher can increase the students' motivation to read a difficult selection by providing background information through an overview of the contents. It is more important for a selection to

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Reading: An ESL Skill at the University

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It has often been said that the one foreign-language skill that students retain throughout their lives is reading. Indeed, learning English to be able to read specialist subject matter in English is a major goal of not a few ESL students, and many of them go on to higher studies in English-medium universities. However, while considerable work has been done on the teaching of reading in ESL programs in the initial and intermediate stages, and most teachers know about and teach the skills of skimming, scanning, reading for main ideas, vocabulary in context, etc., very little information seems to be available on reading at an advanced level, the type of reading needed to cope with university textbooks and references in English. The articles by Norris (1970) and Eskey (1973) are now a decade old, and we do not seem to have gone much further in classroom practice since.

If you visit an advanced reading class, the chances are you will come face to face with one of two activities, both of which pass for "reading" or "comprehension." (These terms will be used interchangeably in this article.) In the first class, the teacher will facilitate the reading process by *explaining the ideas* in a text. Such a teacher believes that once the students have understood the ideas in the text, they will be able to cope with the text itself. However, this approach puts the cart before the horse. The purpose of reading is to discover the author's ideas. While knowing the ideas may help students to cope with the language these ideas are expressed in, it does not truly help them to read. In other words, this approach does not teach the skill of reading.

The second approach, the category into which most "comprehension" textbooks fall, attempts to *explain individual passages*. At its worst this approach is a test. The student is given a passage to read and is then required to answer questions on it. No help is given in understanding the passage. This, of course, does not teach comprehension, but tests whether comprehension has taken place. It does not help the students to read or comprehend. At its best, this approach enables the students to tackle the particular passage at hand, but it does not prepare them for the next one. They therefore face the same problem of comprehension at every passage they are required to read.

A better approach

What is needed, therefore, is an approach that will help the students read the passage before them, and at the same time enable them to read with improved facility the next, which may be completely different and unrelated. In short, we should teach our students the techniques of reading and comprehension, and not just have them read and, hopefully, comprehend.

This, of course, raises a serious question. What exactly is involved in reading and comprehending? As yet, re-

search has not given us a complete answer. However, it is generally agreed that comprehension involves visual mechanical skills of recognition, an ability to relate letters or groups of letters to their sound correlates, remembering the meaning of individual words, integrating grammatical and semantic clues, and relating this to the reader's own general knowledge and his knowledge of the subject being read (Weber 1976:97. Compare Norris's five skill areas, Norris 1970:21). Ideally, therefore, our teaching should incorporate all these aspects.

Reading, however, is not just getting the message *out of* the page, though this is involved. Reading involves putting the message *into* the page (cf. Goodman 1967). As Weber (1976:100) has succintly put it,

> The detailed study of reading has led to a concept of fluent reading which recognizes readers' application of their linguistic abilities in the strategies they employ to derive meaning from print. It has helped to shape the view that they bring to bear not only knowledge of the world and of the subject and a particular purpose, but also expectations of the way texts are organized and specific principles for interpreting the linguistic structure that they meet. Along with these they bring their knowledge of the redundancy in the language so that they look at the letters and apply a minimum of effort. Therefore, it is clear that only a small part of the information necessary for reading with understanding comes from the printed page.

The L_1 reader, ideally, is able to predict what is coming in his reading through his knowledge of his native language. The L_2 reader is unable to do this, as he lacks precisely this linguistic background knowledge. The L_1 reader can, ideally, draw on an intrinsic store of linguistic knowledge, although, as most teachers know, this may have to be made explicit to help the reader improve his reading. The L_2 reader has to be *taught* how to predict. Teaching reading at an advanced level is not just a question of skimming, scanning, vocabulary, and syntax. Nor can I fully agree with Strevens (1977:116) when he suggests that advanced reading is "no longer a language task, but . . . a contribution to the general education and intellectual development of the learner, at whatever point he may be, since in his reading he is now dealing with *ideas*, as well as *information*, conveyed in written language." Teaching reading at an advanced level is also a language task. It involves, among other things, teaching the student to predict by making explicit the linguistic and rhetorical relationships implicit in any text.

Some prediction techniques

Most L_2 university students plunge into their reading tasks with wild abandon, plodding their way through the text from the beginning and, hopefully, arriving at the end. Usually somewhere in between, more often than not at the beginning, comprehension breaks down. Students see the text, but do not read it. Yet the very same students would not dream of walking through an unknown forest without a map or other guide, without following the footpaths or signposts. Nor would they dream of diving off a high rock into the sea without first finding out how deep the water was, whether there were any submerged rocks in the area, or if there was a dangerous current. Likewise, they should be more prudent in tackling a reading assignment.

The title, copyright, footnotes, and editor's comment provide a fund of information for predicting what a passage will be about. A title such as "Justice" will not only indicate a possible development for the topic (e.g., exposition), but will often indicate that the writer will begin by defining his terms. Similarly, a title such as "Marriage and Divorce" will indicate a probable development by comparison and contrast. The reader is therefore prepared for the flow of the discourse even if he does not comprehend it fully, or if there are unfamiliar vocabulary items that block his path.

A copyright date will not only tell the reader the year of publication, but also something of the style of the language. A repeated copyright would suggest a popular work, one therefore accessible to the general reader and probably in a simple style. The title, too, provides clues to style and register. If the reader has been able to predict from the title that the passage is about sociology, physiology, physics, politics, or theology, he is able to give a word like *body* its correct meaning, one which will be slightly different in each discipline.

Introductions are never to be despised; yet how many readers, teachers included, ignore them completely? An introduction will often outline a text, indicate its main points, suggest how a topic will (or will not) be developed, stress particular characteristics of the writing, and much more besides. Conclusions do much the same in retrospect. Textbooks often have previews, reviews, and overviews which perform the same function. Learned articles have summaries or abstracts in addition to introductions and conclusions.

The length of an article and the number of paragraphs it contains not only prove to the weary reader that an end is in sight, but also often give valuable clues to the organization of a text. In reasonably well written articles the number of paragraphs will indicate the number of main ideas. Six paragraphs will indicate six or probably fewer main points, not more. Paragraph length also helps prediction. In a series of long paragraphs, short paragraphs are rarely new main ideas but secondary ones.

Having worked through the above procedures, readers now have a general framework within which they can relate what they read, and according to which they can put meaning into the page. They are now ready for the text itself. But before they plunge in, they should skim through the text, looking quickly at the beginning of each paragraph to see if they can recognize any topic sentences. In most well-written textbooks this alone will provide readers with detailed enough notes for study purposes. They may even discover to their joy and relief that they need read no further. Their task is done!

If, however, the reader does decide to "drink deep," the topic sentences will provide him with a clear framework on which to build the rest of his reading and will remind him of where the writer is going and how he is getting there. If these techniques are followed, what remains is just detail.

Recognizing relational signals

In spite of all they have been taught in the writing class, most students fail to realize when they read a paragraph that it has an organization. The teacher should point out the relation between reading and writing and take advantage of it (cf. Carr 1967). Ideas are stated, then developed in various ways. Examples and illustrations are often given before the idea is rounded off or allowed to lead to another idea. A paragraph is not just a collection of sentences; these sentences are related to one another. Moreover, these relations are usually clearly marked. *Thus, therefore, because, as a result* are some of the more obvious signposts. But words like *several* and *various* are often indicators of a coming series; *first* will lead to *second, third,* etc., or *next, then;* and *similarly* and *as* will indicate parallelism.

Recognition of anaphoric and cataphoric reference also increases comprehension. *It* will often refer to a preceding nonpersonal noun, while *this* will refer to a whole phrase, clause, or sentence. *This* and *that* are obvious pointers, but so are *previous, former, above*. *Following, as we shall see, as will be mentioned* point in the other direction.

Awareness of the structure and movement of a passage not only facilitates understanding of the passage, it may also remove many of the difficulties at word and phrase level which deter the inexperienced reader. The following is an example from one of my own reading classes. We were reading a section from Eldridge Cleaver's *Soul on Ice* (1968, quoted in Kane and Peters 1980:85) and came across this sentence: "And just as world revolution has prompted the oppressed to re-evaluate their self-image in terms of the changing conditions, to slough off the servile attitudes inculcated by long years of subordination, the same dynamics of change have prompted the white people of the world to re-evaluate their self-image as well, to disabuse themselves of the Master Race psychology developed over centuries of imperial hegemony."

No one in the class fully understood this sentence, not even the four native speakers of English. What stopped their comprehension, they said, were the words, specifically *slough off, servile, inculcate, disabuse,* and *hegemony*. When they stopped looking at words and began to look at structure for markers, they began to comprehend. *Just as,* at the beginning of the sentence, predicted *same* in the second half of the sentence. They then recognized that the sentence was composed of two parallel halves. The comma after *subordination* confirmed this. Comparing now the two halves, it was easy to see the subject-verb-object structure; indeed, the verb and object are the same in each case.

Students then noticed the comma in the middle of each of the two halves of the sentence. They recognized the relation between the infinitive *to re-evaluate* and the infinitives *to slough off* and *to disabuse themselves*. Immediately the meaning of these words presented itself: *to get rid of*. The relation between *subordination* and *hegemony* also became apparent, and the problem of comprehension was solved, without a dictionary, without an explanation from the teacher, but only with guidance in the relationships involved.

Conclusion

This article has made no claims to explain advanced reading or analyze it. Nor has it given a complete treatment of the techniques available to the teacher of reading. It is, however, a plea for teachers to teach their students how to read by teaching them the skills involved. I hope that teachers will be intrigued by what has been said and stimulated to try some of the suggested techniques in their classes and to develop others of their own.

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A Scientific Reading Program

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The English teachers at Prince of Songkla University, like other teachers in countries where the official language is not English, face a difficult task. Our students must demonstrate an acceptable level of understanding of materials designed for native speakers, e.g., texts in chemistry, biology, political science, etc. Thus, the essential skill is reading, although the other skills—listening, speaking, and writing—should also be improved.

Because the period of study is limited to from two to four semesters, our department has taught EAP (English for Academic Purposes), rather than a general English course, since 1974. Through EAP the students are equipped with the necessary tools for reading textbooks on various subjects in English. Our scientific reading program is designed to meet the purposes of EAP; it is only one part of the Scientific English program, which also includes structure, writing, and scientific description. However, these studies reinforce the development of reading ability.

Reading skills

Since scientific materials are saturated with ideas, they require careful and thorough reading. A proficient reader must coordinate a number of skills: he must read rapidly as well as with a thorough understanding of the subject matter. Therefore, the syllabus of our reading program is designed to introduce the students to four different aspects of reading: *skimming*, *scanning*, *comprehensive reading*, and *critical reading*. After he has mastered these skills, the student is trained to take notes, which is the program's ultimate goal. This program is required of all science-oriented students, even though their period of study varies from two to four semesters.

In this article, I will present the reading techniques in logical steps, for the sake of clarity. Please note, however, that these techniques are introduced to the students not in this order, but in a sequence that seems appropriate to the reading materials and to the students' needs.

Skimming

Since there are a great many materials related to each professional area, the students must be taught to be selective. Skimming techniques will enable them to select only those that are worth reading.

Methods of Skimming

1. Preview
2. Overview
3. Survey

By *previewing*, the student can find out whether the book or article is written by a specialist in a certain field and whether it contains the information he is seeking. In *overviewing*, the student can discover the purpose and scope of the material, and can find sections that are of special interest to him. Through a *survey*, the student will get the general idea of what the material contains.

Skimming is, then, the skill that helps the student read quickly and selectively in order to obtain a general idea of the material. Our program does not give much emphasis to skimming, since our students are used to doing it when they read textbooks in their native language.

Scanning

Scanning helps the student search quickly for the specific information he wishes to get from the material, such as finding the meaning of a word in a dictionary; finding the heading under which required information appears in an index; finding statistical information in tables, charts, or graphs; and finding the answers to certain questions from a text.

Procedure for Scanning

1. Keep in mind only the specific information to be located.
2. Decide which clues will help to find the required information.
3. Move your eyes as quickly as possible down the page to find the clues.
4. Read the section containing the clues to get the information needed.

In this technique the student is trained to think of clues to help him find the specific information. These clues may be a word or words, punctuation, alphabetical order, numbers, etc. The students are also trained to move their eyes rapidly, looking only for the clues, in order to obtain the information quickly.

It requires a great deal of practice to develop scanning skill; therefore, the student is encouraged to use this technique randomly throughout the program. This technique is challenging to the student and helps to alleviate boredom during the class.

Comprehensive reading

Because scientific texts contain a great deal of information, most of which consists of facts, the student must read slowly and carefully, in order to extract information and understand the material. For comprehensive reading, a combination of various types of knowledge and techniques must be acquired. These techniques are emphasized in our program because they can help the student deal successfully with the problems he faces when he reads scientific texts.

To read scientific material comprehensively, the student must learn and practice the following:

1. Vocabulary recognition
2. Sentence comprehension
3. Paragraph analysis
4. Interpretation of illustrations

Each of these items will be discussed in detail.

1. *Vocabulary Recognition*

When reading material in English, the student frequently faces a crucial problem: being unable to determine the meaning of a word, and thus being unable to understand what he is reading. To help him cope with this problem, we teach the student *three* useful techniques:

a. The simplest technique is to check the meaning of the word in a dictionary. This is, in a way, the best technique, since it provides the exact meaning of the word. The student must, therefore, be taught to use the dictionary effectively.

b. The second technique is to interpret the meaning by *word analysis*. The student is taught to break down words into small elements: stem, prefix, and suffix. Throughout the program, we introduce to the student the meanings of frequently used stems and affixes. The student is thus taught to find the meaning of a difficult word by breaking it into two small elements, then interpreting the meaning of each element in order to obtain the meaning of the entire word.

c. The last technique is to guess the meaning of the word from the context by using *context clues*. The student is taught to find the clues: the context may give some definition or contrasting statement that the student can use to discover the meaning of the unfamiliar word; or the context may describe a situation that will enable the student to use his experience or imagination to guess the meaning of the word; or the student may be able to infer the meaning from the context.

The student is encouraged to use word analysis and context clues to derive the meaning of unfamiliar words, since these techniques do not interrupt the flow of reading. If the student is not successful in obtaining the meaning in either of these ways, he will have to resort to the dictionary.

2. *Sentence Comprehension*

When reading a textbook, an article, or other material in English, it frequently happens that although a student knows every word in a sentence, he still cannot understand what the sentence means, especially when it is long and complicated. To help the student understand such sentences, we suggest four techniques:

a. Sentence analysis
b. Recognition of punctuation clues
c. Recognition of reference terms
d. Recognition of signal words

A detailed description of these four techniques follows:

a. *Sentence Analysis*. Whenever a student does not understand a sentence, he should analyze the sentence by breaking it down into its parts. In order to do this properly, the student must be taught to recognize various sentence patterns. With this knowledge, he can analyze a complicated sentence by looking for the main verb, then the subject head (only the subject itself, excluding its modifiers). If the main verb requires an object or a complement, he must find the object head (excluding its modifiers) or complement. The last thing to look at is the modifiers. This procedure will help him to understand the sentence structure.

b. Recognizing Punctuation Clues. Punctuation, like words, helps to convey the writer's ideas. Therefore, the student must recognize the meaning and use of punctuation marks. Throughout the course, we encourage the student to use his knowledge of punctuation to help him understand the meaning of words and sentences.

c. Recognizing Reference Terms. A reference term is a word used to replace another word so that the writer does not have to repeat the same word again and again. The student should be encouraged to ascertain what the reference term refers to in each case.

d. Recognizing Signal Words. A signal word is a word or phrase that functions as a connector in a sentence, between sentences, or between paragraphs. Thai students do not generally appreciate the importance of these words in English, and this tends to limit their comprehension of what they read. Therefore, we teach the students to give more attention to signal words and to try to interpret what it is they indicate in each case.

The signal words that we introduce to the students are those that indicate:

a. Addition: *and, as well as, besides*, etc.
b. Cause-effect relationships: *hence, due to, as a result*, etc.
c. Condition: *if, when, unless*, etc.
d. Contrast: *but, though, despite*, etc.
e. Comparison: *like, unlike, in the same way*, etc.
f. Doubt or hypothesis: *possibly, probably*, etc.
g. Emphasis: *above all, really, in effect*, etc.
h. Sequence or order of events: *first, later, eventually*, etc.
i. Examples and restatements: *for example, that is, namely*, etc.

3. *Paragraph Analysis*

Sometimes a student understands all the sentences in a reading passage, but still does not understand what it says as a whole. This is because he does not know how the material is organized. We therefore try to help the student understand how the information is organized in the passage. We do this by teaching him to:

a. find the topic.
b. find the main idea.
c. find major supporting details.
d. find minor supporting details.

4. *Interpreting Illustrations*

Most scientific materials are accompanied by illustrations to help the reader understand the ideas presented; e.g., explanations or descriptions of processes, measurements, and the presentation of facts. Frequently used illustrations include line drawings, graphs, tables, block diagrams, and photographs. Our students have already learned about these illustrations from other subjects; therefore we simply give them practice in interpreting illustrations quickly and accurately by means of scanning.

Critical reading

Understanding all the sentences and paragraphs does not mean that the student thoroughly understands the reading material. He must learn to *read critically*. This will enable him to understand the author's purpose, to distinguish facts from opinions, to judge the reliability of the opinions presented, to interpret the statements further, and to draw inferences or implications from what is presented.

To be able to read critically, the student must learn to:

1. examine the reliability of the material.
2. distinguish facts from opinions.
3. draw inferences from the material.

1. *Examining the reliability of the material* involves scanning, i.e., looking for the name and qualifications of the author, the name of the publisher and the source of the material, and the date of publication. The information so gained will help the student judge whether the material is worth reading or not.

2. *Distinguishing facts from opinions*. The student should be trained to recognize whether the statements are facts or opinions. This can be done through practice.

3. *Drawing inferences*. Inferential reading can be used to predict outcome, establish cause-and-effect relationships, and ascertain the correct sequence of events. The student should be trained to draw conclusions based on reasoning and known facts or events.

Note-taking

The reading skills discussed above enable the student to comprehend what he reads. However, to gain more from his reading, he should take notes as he reads. This will help him to understand better as well as to retain what he has read. Toward the end of our reading program, we train our students to take good notes, through:

1. recording key points.
2. reducing language content.
3. organizing their notes.

1. *Recording key points*. The student should record only the main idea and the important details.

2. *Reducing language*. The student should make short notes by reducing the language content. This can be done in several ways:

   a. Deleting certain words, e.g., articles, the verbs *to be* and *to have*, unimportant adjectives, adverbs, etc.
   b. Using symbols and numbers instead of words
   c. Using abbreviations, both standard and personal
   d. Using acronyms
   e. Using tables, charts, and diagrams

3. *Organizing notes in a format that is easy to understand*. As there is no standard format for notes, the students are encouraged to take notes either in the form of charts, tables, or diagrams, or by writing down words, phrases, or sentences appropriate to their needs.

In conclusion, we try to equip our students with a variety of tools that they can use when they read. We also give them extensive practice in selecting the particular skill or skills needed to deal with their reading materials. Since instituting this program, we have observed a remarkable improvement in our students' reading ability. We therefore wanted to share this experience with other EAP teachers.

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come close to the learners' interests and concerns than to suit the teacher's taste. As much as possible, learners should read about facts, events, and ideas with which they are already familiar through their everyday lives.

Another important activity of the reading program is "reading at the drop of a pin." Since reading is primarily an individual activity, the teacher should provide a quiet time when individual reading is the primary activity. The teacher, as well as the students, should remain quiet during the silent-reading period. Talking about the content of the selection can come after the individual reading, either between partners or in small groups.

In planning for extensive reading, the teacher should provide an environment promotive of the idea that reading yields enjoyment and pleasure. Seen in this perspective, reading in an English course comes closer to reading in the native language. The activities for a reading program should be planned with the final objective of reading competence in mind at all times.

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Reading Scientific Texts in English

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The English language has developed, especially since World War II, into the most important language in the world for international communication. It is also the main language used in the international scientific and technical community. As a result, the last ten years or so have seen the emergence of special English courses for nonnative speakers which have been concerned, mainly, with teaching English to science and technology students. An important reason for the emergence of these special courses has been the demand from Third World countries for the scientific and technical knowledge of the advanced industrialized countries. Foreign governments, educational institutions, and private companies in many parts of the world have correctly perceived the connections between the English language and science or technology.

This article is concerned primarily with establishing what seems to be obvious and yet is in need of stating: that science textbooks and science texts are very complicated documents for the native-speaking English student, quite apart from the student studying in a second language. This complexity is a product of three separate, yet closely connected, variables: the linguistic, the rhetorical, and the conceptual. After briefly outlining the nature of scientific texts from this viewpoint, the article then goes on to examine some of the problems that can arise in an ESP reading program. Finally, an attempt is made to develop an outline of guidance notes for ESP reading programs based on the issues arising from the analysis.

Most observers would agree that scientific and technical knowledge is communicated mainly through printed documents: scientific texts, science textbooks, research papers, technical manuals, and technical handbooks. It is for this reason that textbook readings form an important part of nearly every course here in the English Language Centre at King Abdulaziz University, and that so much emphasis is placed on reading-reference skills. This emphasis on the written word and reading skills is characteristic of ESP courses in many parts of the world. It is important, therefore, to analyze scientific texts so that teachers are better informed about the nature of the tasks, the skills involved, and the problems that can arise. In the following discussion, "scientific text" will be used to mean not only the written word in the sentence and paragraph but, in a much wider sense, anything used in science textbooks, research papers, reports, science journals, and technical publications to communicate ideas, knowledge, or information.

For the sake of analysis, then, we can divide scientific texts into three parts: the linguistic, the rhetorical, and the conceptual.

The linguistic part of scientific texts

The language of scientific texts can be described in terms of vocabulary and syntax. In any examination of the vocabulary of scientific texts, the specialist vocabulary from the subject area is an obvious focal point. Each section of science, every subject area, every technical area, has a particular store of words that it uses regularly. Many of these words have been purposefully coined by practitioners in the subjects. Occasionally, words from the specialist vocabulary are found in the newspapers or in other non-specialist publications; usually, though, their home is between the covers of a science textbook or in the text of a research paper. In many cases, only the teachers, practitioners, or students of a subject will be familiar with such words. Medical science, especially, uses many words that are incomprehensible to the layman. Only a few readers of this article will ever encounter the word *erysipelas* again, and yet this word was used by Hippocrates and remains in use to name a particular kind of skin disease. It is the almost exclusive use of such words in scientific texts that can lead to the mistaken belief that in the mastery of these words lies the key to successful reading. There is far more involved in ESP reading success, however, than mastery of the specialist vocabulary.

Cowan (1974) has drawn attention to a body of words widely used in scientific and technical areas but yet exclusive to none. These "subtechnical" words are described as *"context-independent words which occur with high frequency across disciplines."* These subtechnical words are not as exclusive in use or application as the specialist words and can be found in more general contexts.

In addition to these two groups of words, there is also what might be called the general vocabulary of written English. Words from this group are found wherever there is written English.

In recent years, some work has been done in quantifying the vocabulary of scientific texts. Inman (1978) has described the findings of a computer-aided frequency count of 114,000 words of running or continuous text. The study was carried out in Tehran University in 1973–74 on a sample of randomly selected English texts drawn from such areas as biology, mathematics, and engineering. A statistical analysis showed that about 21% of the words were technical (i.e., specialist), about 70% were subtechnical, and the remaining 9% were described as functional words. The ten most common functional words (in descending order of frequency) were: *the, of, in, and, to, is, that, for, are,* and *be*. These ten words alone accounted for about 25% of the total sample. The ten most common subtechnical words were: *high, system, result, process, function, form, temperature, large, solution,* and *structure*. Other research (Roe 1977) on ten English undergraduate-level textbooks supports these findings.

Critics of the usefulness of word counts have pointed out that words occur in a syntactic context and that their frequency of occurrence is no true guide to the difficulties encountered by a student attempting to read and understand scientific texts. Clearly, therefore, it is also important to consider the syntax used in scientific texts.

The syntax used in scientific texts is exactly the same syntax as that used in other contexts. Although there is a scientific lexis, there is no scientific syntax. Many writers, however, have described the special linguistic features of scientific texts. These special linguistic features are similar to the subtechnical vocabulary: they are not exclusive to scientific texts and yet are widely used in them. A list of such features would include the following:

1. Passive voice: used to depersonalize texts. Also used to focus attention on the grammatical subject (Swales 1971).
2. Present simple: used to describe sequences, processes and cycles. Also used to state general truths.
3. Past tense and present perfect: used to refer to previous research and imply relevance to present research by an appropriate choice between these tenses (Selinker, Vroman, Trimble 1974).
4. Complex subjects and simple verb forms: in contrast with conversational or literary English, the verb form in scientific texts is usually simple, whereas the subject is often complex (Swales 1971).
5. Modal verbs: used widely in scientific texts; in particular, to make predictions (Joos 1964, Ehrman 1966).
6. Latin and Greek affixes: many scientific words are formed from these two languages. Savory (1967) has shown in great detail the development and history of scientific vocabulary and the part played in word formation by these languages.
7. Hitchcock (1978) has referred to many of the above items and in addition describes and comments on the use of pronouns, articles, modifiers, and relativization in scientific texts.
8. Gopnik (1972) has analyzed scientific texts and identified the characteristic features, such as the use of measurement, interpretation, and law-like statements, the use of intention and conclusion sentences, and the use of comparative and temporal structures.

While this list may not be fully comprehensive, it does reveal that writers of scientific texts are selective in their use of the general linguistic features of the English language. The selection is made from these general features and reinforces the point that the language of scientific texts in English uses the same structures as those in other English texts.

The rhetorical part of scientific texts

The quickest glance at a science textbook and a novel will show the different approaches involved in these forms of communication. The novel employs continuous text. In contrast, the science textbook employs running text, captions, diagrams, tables, photographs, mathematical formulae, and so on. The fundamental purpose of a science textbook is to present a knowledge of the subject. The writer of the textbook, however, presents this knowledge in a wider, shared context which involves making assumptions about the reader. These assumptions affect the way in which the knowledge is presented and the language employed in that presentation. A study of the rhetoric of scientific texts must be concerned with the organization of the language, the presentation of the knowledge, and the writer's assumptions about the reader. The most useful way to begin analyzing the rhetoric of scientific texts is by looking briefly at the scientific method.

Contrary to some claims, scientific method is not concerned solely with the generation of hypotheses to explain phenomena and the subsequent testing, verification, or improvement of these hypotheses. Any adequate account would include the following points:

1. Careful and systematic observation
2. The collection and recording of data
3. Systematic procedures for collecting and evaluating data
4. Production of explanations, hypotheses, laws, and theories to account for phenomena
5. Predictions based on hypotheses, theories, and laws
6. Systematic procedures for evaluating hypotheses, theories, and laws
7. Classification of data, knowledge, hypotheses, laws, and theories creating a logically coherent system
8. The production of hierarchies of knowledge leading to general laws of nature
9. A concern with accurate measurement and standard units of measurement
10. A concern with precise description and standard units of meaning
11. The use of controlled conditions, as in a laboratory, to eliminate variables and thereby determine causal connections
12. The use of mathematics to describe, quantify, analyze, and predict phenomena
13. Suffusing all else, the scientific method is the product of a rational way of looking at nature. It is an approach to nature that seeks to discover, describe, measure, and explain the world in natural rather than supernatural terms.

The organization of rhetoric of scientific texts is a reflection, in part, of the scientific method. Precise and accurate description is the hallmark of scientific prose. Formal and informal definitions are commonly found, and this emphasis on the careful control of meaning is certainly a factor in the development of a specialist vocabulary. Related to the standard definitions is the use of standard units of measurement where each unit is carefully defined and described within an interlocking system. There is constant reference to data: the raw "facts" of a subject to be woven into the fabric of the science. These data and knowledge are classified and ordered. There is an elaboration of theories or laws to explain the data. The knowledge in scientific texts is presented as part of a structured, logically coherent system. These features of scientific texts are features of the scientific method. Other rhetorical features, however, can also be found.

Selinker, Trimble, Trimble (1976) have studied the rhetorical organization of texts at the sentence/paragraph level of communication. They have distinguished between the conceptual paragraph and the physical paragraph as bearers of meaning. The main idea or theme of a piece of text can be contained in one paragraph or can straddle more than one paragraph. They mention instances in which students have failed to understand a text, even when they are familiar with the language used, because of an inability to use or recognize the rhetorical features in a text. If we examine the rhetoric of scientific texts from a broader perspective, we find many devices other than continuous text organized in paragraphs.

Maps, diagrams, graphs, tables, formulae, photographs, captions, charts, and drawings are widely used features of scientific texts. Each of these devices is used to convey information to the reader, and is a potential obstacle to an understanding of the subject area. In addition to these other ways of presenting information, there is also the physical organization of the material in chapters or sections, the use of footnotes and references, the use of an index and a table of contents. The rhetoric of scientific texts is much more involved than the rhetoric of the text alone.

Assumptions about the reader, which cause the writer to write in one way rather than another, are thereby part of the rhetoric of texts. An important linguistic assumption made by writers of scientific texts concerns the supposed reading competence of the reader. English-language science textbooks, research papers, and technical publications assume, in the main, a high level of reading competence. They assume a knowledge of the syntax of the English language. They assume a knowledge of the general vocabulary and subtechnical vocabulary of the language. Hence word-frequency counts and studies reveal these features in scientific texts. Only for a specific readership—schoolchildren—is there an attempt to simplify the language. Otherwise, for most scientific texts, proficiency in the language is assumed.

Lastly, the language of science is informative rather than emotive. The factual style of scientific writing is a result of conscious choice on the part of the writer. It is the result of a rhetorical decision to depersonalize knowledge. In some of the classics of modern scientific writing, the personality and vision of the writer are an integral and attractive part of the text. Nevertheless, there is a deal of truth in the remark that "a scientific paragraph says precisely what it means, and no more; it reads as if it had been composed by a robot, with oil for blood and cogs for corpuscles" (Savory 1967).

The conceptual part of scientific texts

In addition to linguistic assumptions, the writer of scientific texts makes assumptions concerning the conceptual knowledge of the reader. Although these conceptual assumptions are, strictly speaking, concerned with the rhetoric of texts, it is useful to examine this feature separately.

It could be argued that a distinction ought not to be made between language and concepts, since concepts are expressed through language, hence the conceptual difficulty of a text is in fact the linguistic difficulty of the text. Concepts and language are not, however, logically identical items.

Concepts of space and time can be held in the absence of language. Bees can discriminate between different colors and can be said to have an operational concept of color. Many readers, at some stage in their reading life, have been able to read and understand a sentence or paragraph at one level (which might be called the linguistic level) and yet fail to understand it at another level (which might be called the conceptual level). "Mass and energy are mutually convertible under certain conditions. The equation connecting the two quantities in any such transformation is $E=mc^2$, where c is the velocity of light in m/s and E is the energy, in joules, released when a mass of m kilograms is completely converted into energy" (Penguin Dictionary of Science 1971). This definition will be linguistically clear to many readers, but in what sense can the layman reader, or the non-physicist, be said to understand this definition conceptually? If linguistic understanding were sufficient for literature courses at universities, there would be little need for literary criticism, nor would n undergraduates produce n interpretations of a single text.

A friend of Charles Darwin wrote to him about a parrot owned by the friend's father, "It always said 'good morning' to everyone at breakfast, and 'good night' at night, and it never mixed the salutations." (From Moore 1954.) Could it be said that the parrot was linguistically competent (in however so small an area of language) but conceptually deficient? This is not the place to enter into a discussion of the philosophy of language; nevertheless, it does seem that scientific texts can be considered in terms of their conceptual fields, the level of difficulty of the concepts, and the assumed conceptual knowledge brought to the text by the reader from his own culture. Furthermore, the level of conceptual difficulty can be considered separately from the language used. When it is considered separately, the conceptual level of a scientific text is a further source of potential difficulty for the L_2 reader. Scientific texts not only make assumptions about the linguistic competence of the reader, but also conceptual assumptions concerning the knowledge of the subject that the reader brings to the text.

This analysis has sought to establish the complexity of scientific texts in terms of the language used, the concepts involved, and the rhetorical organization of the texts. In the remainder of the article, I will try to use the insights gained from this analysis to examine ESP theory and practice in the domain of reading scientific texts.

English for specific purposes: theory and practice

A number of salient points relating to the ESP reading program can be made. First, reading materials should be relevant. By "relevant" is meant a text or series of texts which is representative of the subjects that the student is studying. The rationale for using "authentic" texts is, partly, that students will perceive the relevance of the task and will be, thereby, more strongly motivated and better disposed towards the task than if non-relevant texts were used. Allied to the use of authentic texts to increase motivation is a related position which claims that "you learn by doing" and that the best way to learn to do something is by doing it. Since the intention of an ESP reading program for science and technology students is to enable these students to use scientific texts in English for studies in the subject area, it is better to practice on relevant material than on irrelevant material.

In my experience, however, using authentic texts and basing a reading program on a "learn by doing" approach is *by itself* no guarantee that student motivation will be better than otherwise, nor, more to the point, that a student's reading performance will improve significantly. Quite the reverse can happen. If, for instance, an Arab undergraduate student is presented with college-level or British University-level science texts or science textbooks when his general reading ability is low or mediocre, his knowledge of the subject limited, and his awareness of the rhetoric of scientific texts minimal, the result will be the destruction of any motivation that he had and a guarantee that he will not develop reading fluency.

Hosenfeld (1977) has referred to a study of the reading abilities of two boys and the way in which performance (either good or bad) was a function of confidence. A teacher's intuition and experience is certain to reveal that self-confidence—the self-image of a person—is a vital factor in the performance of any complex task. The psychology of learning recognizes the importance of praise, for example, to boost confidence and reward appropriate learning behavior. Where appropriate learning behavior is well-nigh impossible, however, because the task set is beyond the ability of the student, the confidence of that student will soon suffer a fall.

Where students are laboring over scientific texts, where they rarely achieve reading fluency, where they quickly learn to answer questions by reproducing undigested chunks of irrelevant text, where fear is an emotion produced by the task, there, clearly, the teaching practice is indefensible. This can too easily happen where there is a hasty application of ESP theory. The danger from some general English courses for science and technology students is triviality of task and irrelevance of language. The danger from some ESP reading courses is that of setting too high a task for the reading level of the student.

It is not enough to assume that "authentic texts = relevance = motivation" when a key variable, the reading level of the student, is ignored. It is not enough to assume that "you learn by doing" when the task set is well beyond the ability of the student. Learning by doing is an admirable precept when the task is within the ability range of the student and where learning proceeds through graded tasks.

For many Third World undergraduates the syntax, general vocabulary, and subtechnical vocabulary is a sufficient hurdle to reading fluency. The specialist vocabulary merely adds to the burden. (Inman argues that the specialist vocabulary should be left to the subject teacher to introduce or explain.) Where the rhetorical organization of scientific texts is new to a student, along with the concepts and knowledge of the subject, it is all too easy to overload the student. It may also be that the unwritten assumptions about nature which underpin modern science are not familiar to the student: the philosophical assumptions about the basic uniformity of nature, that the future will resemble the past in important ways; about the nature of causal connections; and the status of scientific laws. Certainly, modern science is a product of Western civilization and cannot be simply transmitted through the use of science textbooks, for example, nor assumed to be part of the psychological "set" of the reader.

The following points are based on experience and on this analysis of scientific texts. They are, by their nature, general points on the design of an ESP reading program rather than specific details on the production of appropriate teaching material or the ways to develop reading-reference skills.

- Thorough and comprehensive entry tests of the students' reading-reference skills is vital to an ESP reading program.
- Such tests would need to determine students' reading fluency in general texts, knowledge of common subtechnical words, ability to extract information from non-textual devices, and knowledge of the important rhetorical devices used in scientific texts.
- Course testing should be geared to recognizing changes in entry-test performance.
- Where authentic texts are used, tests should allow for problems introduced by the conceptual level of the texts.
- Adequate information is required on the students' knowledge of the subject areas.
- Authentic texts should be introduced cautiously into the ESP reading program.
- Simplified texts and general English texts should be used, especially where authentic texts are too difficult for the students, so that reading confidence and general reading ability are developed.
- Techniques that increase general vocabulary and subtechnical vocabulary should be developed.
- Techniques that increase knowledge of the rhetoric of texts should be developed.
- Authentic texts should be introduced in tandem with subject studies or shortly after subject studies.

Some final remarks need to be made. The fact that ESP courses are requested and organized is in itself evidence that students are unable to deal with the language (and rhetoric) of scientific texts. Consequently, an ESP reading program should never be based solely on authentic texts, but should also use reading material or teaching material that will develop the student's ability to eventually read scientific texts as part of his subject studies. The reading material must be brought down to the level of the student.

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Humanistic Education in Action: A Practical Problem

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LILLIAN GROEBEL has taught English, first as a native language and then as a foreign language, for more than twenty years. "Working with non-standard speakers of English in Hawaii," she tells us, "aroused my interest in teaching English to speakers of other languages." She arrived in Israel in 1969 and began teaching the reading of English to Israeli students at the University of Haifa. Mrs. Groebel has served as supervisor of the English program for pre-academic studies at the University of Haifa and also as head of the Department of Foreign Languages, while devoting most of her efforts to teaching and research.

Lillian Groebel writes: "Scattered throughout the April 1981 issue of the ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM is reference to the concept of humanistic methods in English-language teaching. The lead article carefully describes the advantages of applying these techniques in storytelling activities in order to arouse 'the students' emotional and imaginative potential.' The next article argues that 'an effective teacher should facilitate both the intellectual and moral growth of his pupils' and describes humanistic activities that can contribute to that end. Finally, under 'News and Ideas,' Gertrude Moskowitz, who has promoted humanistic techniques for some years, presents excerpts from her book on this subject.

"In view of its present popularity, criticizing the humanistic approach, however muted the criticism might be, could turn out to be risky business. Nevertheless, it would seem that some cautions are in order. The article which follows is not a polemic but rather is a recommendation for reasonable utilization, which, if carefully considered, might result in greater success. I sincerely hope that this will be the case."

Searching for the ideal framework for teaching a foreign language is somewhat like seeking the mythical pot of gold at the end of the rainbow. It is always elusive, and just when it seems to be within grasp, we discover that what we really have is a disappointing facsimile. But discouragement is not generally the hallmark of education; we continue our search, and that is all to the good. As educators we have a serious responsibility to maintain open and receptive attitudes, to investigate new theories, and to test new practices in our classrooms. But we have an even more serious obligation to do so in a scientifically experimental way. If we embrace a new approach blindly; if we fail to weigh its values and deficits carefully; if we fail to adopt what is reasonable and discard what is absurd or even risk-ridden, we are likely to discover that what we are left with is mere fool's gold and not a genuinely effective teaching paradigm. I fear that we are faced with just such a possibility at the present time. There is a strong tendency to accept the humanistic theory as a panacea for all our ills and to introduce some version of it into the classroom in a docile, unquestioning way, neglecting to apply to it the rigorous tests and the objectivity that are the due of any new approach. It is not so much a fault of the theory as it is a fault of those of us who, in our eagerness to adopt it, forget to exercise appropriate restraint.

The emergence of humanistic techniques

During the last four decades there were lessons to be learned and conclusions to be drawn on the language scene, but many of us have been derelict in heeding those implications. There were some who, at one time, regarded the traditional grammar-translation method as the pure gold which would bring them padagogic wealth, but they were finally forced to admit that the glitter was not as bright as they had thought. Then came the turn of the audiolinguists, who were doomed to repeat history as they discovered that their method was not adequate to provide all the solutions to their language problems. As late as 1970, Jakobovits wrote, "The most widespread method of FL teaching today . . . is the audiolingual approach which claims to have largely displaced the earlier traditional method of grammar-translation." He further declared that "The present shortcomings of the not-so-new audiolingualism may be viewed in part as attributable to the unchecked swing of the pendulum away from the earlier traditionalist emphasis on prescriptive grammar, translation, and the reading of belletristic literature. The danger, now that audiolingualism is on the defensive and students are increasingly demanding 'reading' courses, is that the pendulum might be allowed to swing back too far, so that we lose sight of the vastly superior instructional technology which we now have at our disposal which was nonexistent in the earlier dark ages of FL teaching."

While Jakobovits had his eye on computer-based programmed instruction, foreign-language education was being blown about by other winds, inspired by the popularity of humanists such as Carl Rogers, Abraham Maslow, Gordon Allport, and others. Human individualism was being spotlighted, stage center, by these psychologists. The idea of self-actualization, of the "fully functioning person" who is fully motivated, and of the basic goodness of human nature were all very appealing to educators who like to pride themselves on their empathy, humaneness, and their understanding of the whole student. Humanistic education did not suffer too many birth pangs—it was on its way. As Grittner (1973) observed, "It would seem to me that, if we must jump on bandwagons, the modern humanistic school of thought has the most to offer to the foreign language profession." And we took him at his word. Foreign-language educators clutched the theory to their hearts and adapted it for use in the classroom. With a voice of moderation, Grittner pointed to some of the pitfalls when he added, "We could, perhaps, forgo some of the lunatic-fringe aspects of the movement such as nude marathons, sensitivity sessions, and neo-Rousseauian beliefs in the ability of students to build an educational program on little more than native ignorance, 'gut-level' feelings, and youthful self-righteousness." But it is not the "lunatic-fringe aspects" which are creating our present problems. Those are extreme enough to provide discouragement to the average teacher. It is rather the techniques which carry the aura of respectability that demand our attention. And it is often not so much a matter of the technique, *per se*, that introduces the difficulties as it is the manner in which the technique is applied.

Some applications of humanistic techniques

One of the more attractive adaptations of the humanistic theory was proposed by Stevick (1976) when he developed a blend of Curran's "receptive" learning as used in counseling-teaching techniques, along with Berne's Transactional Analysis, and wove them into a viable set of principles for foreign-language teaching. Although Stevick did say that security can be provided by a teacher who "will always know what he is doing and what he is going to do next and why," his emphasis was on a safe classroom atmosphere which would eliminate any need for psychological defenses. This stress is not a weakness of his principles, but it may lead to a deficiency on the part of teachers who, in their enthusiasm, overlook the fact that sound rules of teaching should not be sacrificed in the interest of introducing a new theory.

The humanistic framework which Galyean (1976) offers includes such concepts as educating for self-awareness as well as for values, and she includes body awareness as an important part of affective learning. (The latter, it might be noted, is also mentioned by Stevick [1976].) According to her, the purpose is to meet student and teacher needs, alleviate anxiety, and develop relaxation and openness, which, hopefully, will lead to communicative competence. But it would seem illusory to expect that language competence can be achieved with such a simplistic and idealistic formula. A teacher concentrating on anxiety reduction in her classroom may easily do so to the exclusion of other equally crucial factors, with detrimental results. Perhaps the vagueness inherent in the idea of meeting student and teacher needs is intended to cover other complex aspects of the process, but vagueness has seldom been known to solve everyday language-classroom problems. Galyean herself says that there is need for cautionary measures.

Freire's (1970) work with the oppressed of Brazil inspired his belief that education must be humanized by a "dialogical encounter between teacher and student, and to succeed, the teacher must demonstrate love, humility, faith, trust, and critical thinking." To oppose these concepts seems somewhat like criticizing motherhood, God, or country, and such is far from the purpose of this paper. Freire himself points out that his message is really for radicals, and this should be kept in mind. The foreign-language teacher who wishes to adopt such a philosophy needs a particularly firm foundation, a strong conviction as well as a dedication to the development of a well-thought-out language program. Anything less may well spell failure.

The need for sound teaching procedures

This is not to say that humanistic education does not make a valuable contribution to the foreign-language classroom. It is obvious that students learn best when we afford them opportunities to exploit their skills and experiences and when we minimize their frustrations and antagonisms. But with a top-heavy emphasis on psychological atmosphere, we may neglect the sound, solid, sensible, and sane aspects of the instructional process, the aspects with which all good teachers are concerned.

Let us look at some examples of what I mean. Recently, I had an opportunity to observe several foreign-language lessons for the purpose of evaluating them in terms of humanistic education. The teachers did not know the purpose of my visit, and their lessons were not planned to impress. In the first classroom a student spent the period giving an oral report. The teacher, whom we shall call Teacher A, had created a secure atmosphere and in good humanistic tradition had won the trust of the students. They liked him—good interpersonal relationships had been established—and they felt free to choose when, how much, and whether to participate. The subject matter was inspired by the students' interests, and everyone was relaxed and even fairly interested. Because the level of language competence was low, the teacher was forced to act as an interlocutor in order to clarify what was being said. Corrections were made, sentences rephrased, and questions raised, but on such a massive scale that little learning could take place. Simply stated, the lesson was not tied down; it was not going anywhere. If there was a purpose, it was obscured. In this class, there was little doubt but that everyone was happy and charmed and felt secure, yet the lesson was a failure. The teacher had been operating in the best tradition of humanistic values but had overlooked the necessity of establishing goals. He had neglected to create the necessary structure for leading the students through the levels of language learning in an orderly way.

In the classroom of Teacher B, there was little emphasis on feelings. Choices were reduced, but the lesson was carefully propelled along with organization and purpose. There was a little more tension, as there usually is when one charges himself with performing well, but the tension led to a phenomenal level of language competence over a short period of time. Students also seemed to enjoy what they were doing, but it was because of a feeling of accomplishment and not because of a particular love for the teacher. The feeling of threat seemed to be minimal, but instead of emphasizing the students' feelings, the stress was placed on language and communicating about everyday student activities. Both students and teacher believed in what they were doing, and everyone was involved and expending effort.

The contrast between the two lessons was marked. Teacher A had stressed humanistic values and had overlooked the practical necessities of a good lesson. Teacher B was not so much concerned with humanism as she was with having the students progress in the best way she knew. This is exactly the message I wish to convey. In an eagerness to apply humanistic ideals, we must be careful not to do so to the exclusion of sound teaching procedures. There is no reason why the two cannot be combined for maximum benefit, but the danger seems to be that concern with humanism will displace effective procedure.

Some unforeseen dangers

Moreover, an inexperienced teacher trying to adopt this new theory may suddenly find herself confronting unexpected problems in the classroom. Attempting to encourage discussion of feelings, one teacher asked his married adult students to describe how they felt on their wedding day. One oriental in the class was thus compelled to reveal the fact that his had been a prearranged marriage and that he had only met his bride on the day they were married. The result was painful and embarrassing for the student, and for classmates and teacher as well. Sensitive students or those with personality problems may not welcome the opportunity to discuss emotions and feelings in a classroom setting. The question also arises as to whether it is the province of a teacher untrained in counseling or sensitivity techniques to deal with such matters.

The approach may be inadvisable not only for individual students, but also for certain groups where cultural backgrounds are in conflict. In such classes (i.e., Arabs and Jews, whites and blacks) an everyday working stability can be achieved, but to effect a real interpersonal understanding by means of an exploration of deeply rooted cultural attitudes requires a very high level of skill on the part of the teacher. It is true that such an instructor might be able to bring about greater acceptance and tolerance on the part of the students, but the risks are great and the inexperienced, naive teacher, or even an old hand who was unprepared for the confrontation, might unwittingly cause an exacerbation of an already difficult relationship. It has been known to occur.

There are also foreign-language classes composed of students whose experience has taught them to resent any intrusion into the personal world of feelings. They have grown up believing that it is the teacher's job to teach, and to deal solely with the subject matter and content of the curriculum. If there is a departure from this approach and the students face the necessity of discussing feelings and attitudes, they may become suspicious or resentful. After twelve years of formal education, they may have concluded that successful achievement depends more on the effort they expend than on an openness or an interaction with fellow students. Therefore, they may question any radical departure from the traditional methods they know. While the foreign-language teacher may be permitted to introduce a kind of humane approach in the classroom by demonstrating her own concern, interest, and empathy, many of the techniques proposed by the humanists would be greeted with derision. Here, too, the teacher inexperienced in such an approach could bring about results contrary to those desired.

Proponents of humanistic education caution that it is not supposed to supplant psychotherapy and that the teacher must first understand herself and her own motivation before she can successfully utilize this strategy. These restrictions seem to preclude general application of the approach. First, because in dealing with inner feelings and anxieties, the teacher may inadvertently tread on areas that are not her responsibility and that she is not professionally equipped to deal with. She may find herself in delicate, painful, and even destructive situations. Secondly, teachers, like fellow members of their society, have their own insecurities, anxieties, and unrecognized needs. They have been provided with the academic background for teaching foreign language, but most have not been sensitized in regard to the complexities of their own personalities and attitudes. They function in an adequate way with varying degrees of psychological comfort, but they have never had the opportunity, nor have they recognized the necessity, of exploring their own personalities. To require that they do so would introduce a new dimension in teacher education. So far, that dimension is not commonly provided. To expect the average teacher to overcome this deficiency or to suggest that she plunge into humanistic techniques without the necessary training, is to place an unfair burden on her. Our average teacher already has enough to cope with without increasing the difficulties.

What successful teaching requires

Nor is there merit in suggesting that we adopt the humanistic point of view on this wholesale scale. Even with teachers fully trained and oriented toward it, it may not hold all the answers to our problems. If we stop to examine the outstandingly successful teachers of our times, we are struck by the fact that they do not belong to any one particular school of philosophy. There may be those who favor a form of traditionalism—and they can still be found—or they may be followers of the audiolingual method, or be humanistic in their outlook. It is possible that some are adherents of another theory. What, then, explains the success that they share? What is the common strand that runs through these approaches, all eminently successful yet apparently very different? In attempting to answer this question we might find a clue to the pot of gold that we have been seeking for many years. In spite of the elusive nature of the problem there are several facts that do emerge and that may prove useful to examine.

First, we find that in all successful classrooms there is an overriding apparent and defined purpose; it is a purpose that is recognized and acknowledged to be worthwhile by both student and teacher. The recognition of the value of the purpose results in a willingness to work toward its end, regardless of the framework. And the labor is not one-sided; it is clear to the student that the instructor is as willing as the students to expend effort in order to reach the objective. In such classes, where both teacher and students understand their goal and its value, they generally want to succeed in reaching it, and diligence is a natural by-product.

Second, both teacher and students are convinced that the method being used to attain the goal is the most effective one available, *regardless of what that method is*. This deep conviction that what is being done will certainly succeed is one that is evident in all successful classes. We find it in the theatrics of Rassias, in the counseling techniques of Curran, and the Suggestopedia of Lozanov. These teachers do not plunge into each new method that appears on the scene; they believe deeply that what they are doing is right. If they do experiment, they do so judiciously and cautiously, being certain that what they do is best for them and their students. This strong faith in the effectiveness of their method seems to lead to maximum foreign-language learning and seems to result in language competence—no matter that the methods are so startlingly different.

Third, the teachers share a common concern about their students as human beings—not in the sense that they expect them to bare their feelings and expose their emotions. Rather, there is a special kind of sensitivity or "radar" that the teacher possesses which picks up the signals of frustration, of fatigue, of loss of interest, of perplexity, of withdrawal, which the teacher can then, in turn, react to in a constructive way. It is not a question of training a teacher to recognize these cues; no one can instruct you in the 1,001 facial expressions, eye movements, or even the absence of all expression which is a signal in itself. This is just a part of the successful teacher's equipment, and may be instinctive or born of experience. But it is an indispensable part.

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Twenty Common Testing Mistakes for EFL Teachers to Avoid

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To some extent, good testing procedure, like good language use, can be achieved through avoidance of errors. Almost any language-instruction program requires the preparation and administration of tests, and it is only to the extent that certain common testing mistakes have been avoided that such tests can be said to be worthwhile selection, diagnostic, or evaluation instruments. The list of common testing problems provided here is by no means exhaustive, but it has been drawn from wide experience with tests prepared for classroom and district use, and may therefore be said to be representative. It is intended as a kind of checklist to serve as a guideline for EFL teachers in the preparation of their own examinations.

The common mistakes have been grouped into four categories as follows: *general examination characteristics, item characteristics, test validity concerns,* and *administrative and scoring issues*. Five specific mistakes have been identified under each of these categories. While some overlap may exist in categories of mistakes and methods of remediation, I believe that each of the following twenty mistakes constitutes a genuine problem which, if resolved, will result in an improved testing program.

GENERAL EXAMINATION CHARACTERISTICS

1. Tests which are too difficult or too easy

When tests are too difficult or too easy, there is an accumulation of scores at the lower or higher ends of the scoring range. These phenomena are known collectively as "boundary effects." As a result of such effects, there is information loss and reduced capacity of the test to discriminate among students in their ability. The net result is a test which is both unreliable and unsuitable for evaluation purposes. For most purposes, care should be taken to prepare tests and items that have about a fifty percent average rate of student success. Such procedure will maximize test information and reliability. This implies that the test should be tried out on a restricted sample of persons from the target population before it is used for student- or program-evaluation purposes.

2. An insufficient number of items

Test reliability is directly related to the number of items occurring on the test. While tests may be too long and thus needlessly tire the students, a more common mistake is for a test to be too short and thus unreliable. For most paper-and-pencil EFL tests it is difficult to achieve acceptable reliability (say .85 or above) with less than 50 items. This is particularly true with tests of listening comprehension. At the same time, EFL tests with 100 or more items rapidly reach a point where the inclusion of additional items yields little or no increase in reliability.

A similar conclusion is true for tests of written or oral production that do not involve the use of items. For these tests as well, a sample of language usage must be elicited from the students that is both large enough and diverse enough in content to permit reliable measurement.

3. Redundancy of test type

In testing general language proficiency, it is common practice to devise a battery of subtests to ensure that all important language skills are covered by the test as a whole. This may well be a necessary step in the development of tests that have validity as measures of general proficiency. The problem arises when such combinations or batteries are indiscriminately maintained beyond the development phase.

It can be demonstrated that, in most cases, increasing the number of subtests adds no significant variance-explanatory information to the test battery beyond that which may be obtained from the three or four best, reliable subtests. What this means in practice is that we indulge in a kind of measurement "overkill" when we proliferate subtests. It has been demonstrated, for example, that inclusion of subtests of error identification, grammar accuracy, vocabulary recognition, and composition writing "leaves no room" for a subtest of listening comprehension (Henning et al. 1980). This is to say that nothing is added beyond the existing components of the test in terms of the ability of the test to explain or predict general EFL proficiency. Many such indiscriminately maintained proficiency tests are inefficient in the sense that they carry too much extra baggage.

4. Lack of confidence measures

Most standardized tests come equipped with a user's manual. The manual provides us with information about the reliability and validity of the tests—both what they are and how they were ascertained. This information permits us to estimate the level of confidence that we may place in the test result when it is applied to various situations. When locally developed tests are used for important evaluative decisions, estimates of reliability and validity should be provided for these tests. Appropriate computational formulas may easily be found in measurement-theory texts.

Closely related to this problem is the need to ensure that the persons on whom the test was tried out in its evaluation stage are from the same general population as those with whom the test is ultimately used. It is not uncommon for unwarranted reliance to be placed in some foreign standardized test when the characteristics of the population with reference to which it was developed are vastly different from those of the population with which it is being used. Vast differences of this sort imply a need for reanalysis of the test in the new situation.

5. Negative washback through non-occurrent forms

Through use of inappropriate structures of the language it is possible to teach errors to the students. Consider the following item:

I __________ here since five o'clock.

a. am being *c*. will be
b. have been *d*. am be

Option *d* clearly does not exist in any natural context in the English language. The possibility exists that a learner, particularly at a beginning stage, might learn this form and entertain the thought that *am* may serve as an auxiliary of *be*. While it is necessary that options include incorrect forms as distractors, it is best if these forms, like *a* and *c* above, have some possible appropriate environment in the language.

ITEM CHARACTERISTICS

6. Trick questions

The use of trick questions must be avoided. As a rule such items impair the motivation of the students, the credibility of the teacher, and the quality of the test. Their use is a distinct sign of poor pedagogy. Consider the following example:

I did not observe him not failing to do his work because he was

a. always working.
b. ever conscientious.
c. consistently lazy.
d. never irresponsible.

A quick glance at this item reveals that the stem contains a double-negative structure that stretches the bounds of normal English usage. Such items are frequently found to have negative discriminability; i.e., many of the better students who have comparatively greater mastery of the lexicon are fooled, while weaker students manage to pass, perhaps by attending to the fact that option *c* is different from the other options.

7. Redundant wording

A common problem in item writing, particularly of multiple-choice type items, is needless repetition. An example would be the following:

He went to school

a. because he wanted to learn more.
b. because he wanted to meet new friends.
c. because he wanted to get a better job.
d. because he wanted to please his parents.

Such an item is better written as follows:

He went to school because he wanted to

a. learn more.
b. meet new friends.
c. get a better job.
d. please his parents.

Items with redundant wording greatly reduce the efficiency of a test in that they reduce the amount of information available from a given period of time available for testing.

8. Divergence cues

In writing options for multiple-choice-type items it is important not to provide cues regarding the choice of the correct option. "Test-wise" students can often answer such items correctly without knowledge of the content these items are said to measure. Typical divergence cues may occur when one option gives greater length or specificity of information. Consider the following example:

In the story we know it was raining because

a. the sky was dark.
b. everyone insisted on wearing an overcoat and carrying an umbrella outside.
c. it was that time of year.
d. they heard thunder.

Without having read the story, we would imagine that *b* was the correct answer merely because greater detail is offered. Option divergence of this kind is to be avoided.

9. Convergence cues

More subtle than divergence cuing is the presence of convergence cuing. Here "test-wise" students can identify the correct option because of content overlap. Look at the following example employing item options without an item stem:

a. crawl   *c*. brawl
b. creep   *d*. trudge

Even without knowledge of the question or item stem, we may venture an educated guess that *crawl* is the correct option. The rationale behind this selection is that options *a*, *b*, and *d* refer to motion of a comparatively slow or simple type. Option *c* has as its only obvious commonality with other options the fact that it rhymes with option *a*. Distraction, of both a semantic and a phonological nature, has been employed then, and the point of convergence is option *a*. It is astounding how many items can be correctly answered in this way without any attention to what is being asked of the examinee.

10. Option number

It is not uncommon to find tests containing items with insufficient or varying numbers of options. Multiple-choice or true-false items leave room for possible success due to random guessing. The fewer the options, the higher the probability of measurement error resulting from successful guessing. With a true-false testing format, we should expect the students to score 50 percent by guessing. True ability measurement would only take place in the scoring range from 51 to 100 percent. This implies that, for such tests, a comparatively large number of items would be needed for accurate measurement.

A problem related to that of insufficient options is that of irregularity in the numbers of options. Apart from an esthetic issue, this irregularity also makes it impossible to apply various formulae for the correction of errors due to guessing. In general it is best to be consistent in the numbers of options used for items within a test.

TEST-VALIDITY CONCERNS

11. Mixed content

A test is valid only to the extent that it accurately measures the content or ability it purports to measure. Sometimes tests have been claimed to measure something different from what many of their items are actually measuring. The following two items are offered by way of example. The first item was said to measure knowledge of verb tenses; the second was said to measure vocabulary recognition:

He ________ the man yesterday.

a. see   *c*. will see
b. saw   *d*. is seeing

The lady ________ to many cities in Europe last year.

a. visited   *c*. visits
b. traveled   *d*. climbed

In the first example, purported to test tense, we find option *a* actually measures knowledge of subject-verb agreement. Similarly, the second item, supposedly measuring vocabulary recognition, includes option *c*, which tests tense. These kinds of inconsistencies make for invalid tests.

12. Wrong medium

Sometimes one encounters tests that require extensive skill in a response medium other than that which is being tested. Consider reading-comprehension questions that require accurate written responses to show comprehension of the passage. Research has indicated that such tests are invalid in the sense that they measure something other than what they are intended to measure (Henning 1975). Care must be taken that the response medium be representative of the skill being tested.

13. Common knowledge

Items that require common-knowledge responses should also be avoided. Consider the following reading-comprehension item as an example:

> According to the story, Napoleon was born in
> *a*. England *c*. Germany
> *b*. France *d*. Italy

Responding correctly to such an item does not entail the ability to comprehend a reading passage, and therefore a high score on tests containing this kind of item may indicate some ability other than reading comprehension.

14. Syllabus mismatch

Perhaps the most common cause of invalid achievement tests is the failure of a test to measure adequately either instructional objectives or course content. When this happens, we say a test lacks face or content validity. When designing achievement tests, the teacher should have a systematic procedure for sampling course content. The course must fit the instructional objectives, and the test as well should reflect the instructional objectives by reference to vocabulary, structures, and skills actually taught.

15. Content matching

A word is in order about tests of comprehension (either reading or listening) that require content matching. Mere matching of a word or phrase in a test item with the exact counterpart in a comprehension passage does not necessarily entail comprehension. Memory span or recognition skills are involved, and these are also important. But they are not the same as comprehension. Tests involving such content-matching tasks are usually invalid as measures of comprehension.

ADMINISTRATIVE AND SCORING ISSUES

16. Lack of cheating controls

Obviously, when students obtain higher scores through cheating, tests are neither reliable nor valid. It is the responsibility of the teacher or the test administrator to prevent such activity. In some cultures there is less stigma attached to collaboration on tests. The teacher should take care to separate students, and where possible use alternate forms of the test. These alternate forms may simply consist of exactly the same items arranged in different sequences. Such forms should be distributed in such a way that every other student in a row has a different form. This will effectively minimize cheating behavior.

17. Inadequate instructions

Instructions must be clear, both to the students and to any test administrators using the test. If the students fail to understand the task, their responses may be invalid, in the sense that the students would have been able to supply the correct answers if they had understood the procedure. There is nothing inherently wrong from a measurement point of view with giving instructions in the native language, unless, of course, it is a test of comprehending instructions in a foreign language.

If the administrators fail to understand the exact procedure, there will be inequities of administration from group to group or administrator to administrator. Procedures should be carefully standardized even if this requires special training sessions for test administrators.

18. Administrative inequities

Not only can differing instructions to administrators result in administrative inequities, but other factors as well may impair the reliability of the test. Consider the situation when lighting is poor for one class and good for another, or when the test administrator reads instructions or comprehension passages at different rates and volumes for different classes. This latter problem is sometimes solved by the use of high-quality recording equipment.

Care must be taken to prevent these inequities and others, such as differential noise distractions, length of testing, time of day or week, supportiveness of administrators, etc.

19. Lack of piloting

It is important to try out the test on a restricted sample from the target population before it is put into general use. This will enable the examiner to be certain the time limits are appropriate, the difficulty is suited to the students, and the items themselves are functioning as they were intended. Many an embarrassing blunder has been avoided by this simple step. Of course, the pilot sample should be apart from the ultimate examinees, to prevent practice effects and security breakdown.

20. Subjectivity of scoring

A final, pervasive problem occurs when instructors give subjective, opinionated judgments of student performance. In composition scoring, for example, it has been found that judgments are often influenced by handwriting neatness. Other factors also may distort accurate judgment. Some judges or raters find themselves becoming more strict or more lenient as they proceed through the papers to be marked. In short, if subjective judgment must be relied on, several mitigating procedures should be employed. First, more than one judge should be consulted independently of marks assigned by other judges.

The total of all judges' ratings should determine the student's mark. Second, judges should make use of some precise rating schedule. A certain number of marks should be deducted for errors of specified type and number. In this way, judges will be giving equal weight to the same kinds of performance. Finally, sufficient samples of language should be elicited from the students. In writing or speaking tests, students should be given more than one topic, to ensure that a more comprehensive picture is taken of their language use in a variety of situations.

These problems are surprisingly common in the preparation of classroom EFL tests. If they are avoided or resolved, the quality of EFL testing will improve. Other problems may also be cited, but the ones enumerated here are certainly among the more common.

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Humanistic Education in Action

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Lastly, the successful teacher seems to have mastered the art of explanation, explanation which is characterized by a high level of clarity. There is little fuzziness; confusion is minimal; and as a result, frustration is reduced. The teachable moment is exploited, and illustrations, examples, comparisons and demonstrations are judiciously employed. Simply stated, the outstanding teacher provides a clear model and explains things lucidly and enthusiastically.

As a result of acknowledged and valued purpose, along with the conviction that the purpose is being achieved in the best possible way, motivation is forthcoming. The ability to provide a strong incentive for foreign-language learning is characteristic of the excellent teacher. She inspires drive on the part of the students and a strong belief in their future success. In doing so, she frees herself of many of the practical problems that arise from blindly embracing each educational innovation.

A plea for moderation

We would make a plea for caution, for moderation in implementing humanistic techniques and for greater preparation for those who really wish to adopt them. Until teachers are given more insight into the use of these methods, until we have more research on the success and potential problems inherent in this approach, and until teachers using it become convinced that it is the most effective strategy for their own situation, the practical problems involved in applying humanistic theory in the foreign-language classroom will continue to arise.

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FORUM NEWS & IDEAS

PEOPLE'S REPUBLIC OF CHINA

Some Reflections on the Teaching of Vocabulary

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Qin Xiu-bai graduated from the English department of the Beijing Institute of Foreign Languages, and has taught English as a foreign language at the college level for more than sixteen years. He currently holds the posts of lecturer in English and vice-chairman of the foreign languages department in Central China Teachers College, Wuhan. "All in all," he writes, "I am still a student of English and will remain so for the rest of my life. I do hope that the ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM will offer me the necessary help so that I can do a better job in the teaching of the English language, for which I must confess I have a feverish love."

In the past few years, I have been taking pains to help my students achieve communicative competence, and I am glad to say that optimal results have been attained. However, I have found that with their increasing fluency in speaking and writing, there emerges the problem of diction, which is daily handicapping their progress. The students *can* communicate in English fairly well with Chinese learners of English, but when it comes to talking face to face with native speakers of English, misunderstanding often occurs on both sides. I remember an occasion when some American friends came to visit my class, and one of my students told one of them in a matter-of-fact manner, "I pay much attention to both politics and profession." This remark immediately cast a shadow of doubt and incomprehensibility on the face of the American friend, who, feeling rather puzzled, said in return, "So you're now studying the science of government with English as means of instruction; and what are you by profession?" This in turn puzzled my student. This incident and many others of a similar kind keep recurring to my mind. Through consultations with my colleagues, I have finally come to see the root cause of such comic occurrences, namely, that my students lack the necessary understanding of the culture upon which an English word is based.

Understanding cultural differences

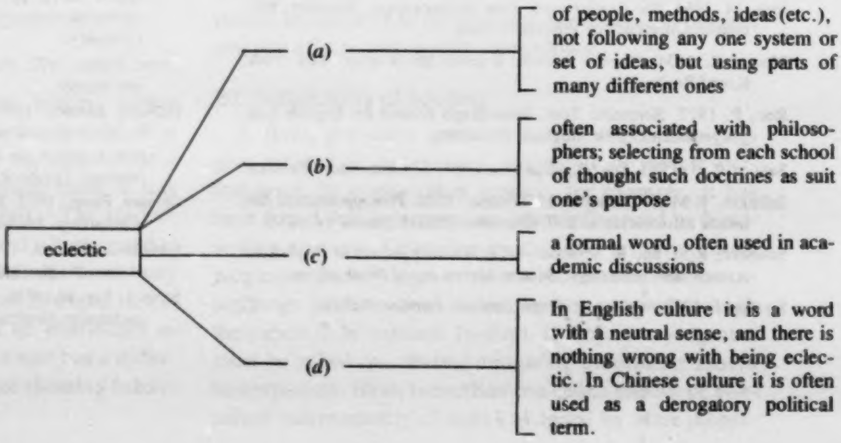
Cross-cultural misunderstanding often arises when the learner does not have sympathetic understanding of the cultural setting of the target language, for language is a vital constituent of culture. Take the above-mentioned words *politics* and *profession*, for example. In Chinese culture, *politics* is always associated with (1) the most important and urgent task of the nation; (2) morale; (3) the most concentrated expression of economics; and (4) one's concern with the future of the motherland. And it is frequently opposed to the word *profession*, which, in many cases in Chinese culture, is equivalent to *technical work* in general as contrasted with *political work*. So, on the occasion I have just mentioned, that student of mine was quite justified, according to his Chinese way of thinking, to say what he said, meaning that he not only paid attention to his English studies (i.e., his technical work), but also concerned himself with state affairs. Set against the English cultural background, the word *politics* refers to the science of government as opposed to business, the army, law, and medicine. Here a direct translation of the word from English into Chinese without allowing for cultural differences will inevitably lead to an inappropriate use of the word. In learning a foreign language, it is essential that the student have a sympathetic understanding of the cultural patterns of the target language.

Some useful steps

To help my students solve the problem, I have taken the following measures in the teaching of vocabulary:

1. I encourage my students to refer to an English-English dictionary whenever they come across a new word in their reading. In China we have very good English-Chinese dictionaries, but these dictionaries contain only word-for-word translations of the basic denotations of English words; as a result, other properties of a word, such as connotation and music or rhythm, are more often than not lost in the process of translation. For instance, both *house* and *home* are defined in an English-Chinese dictionary as equivalents of the Chinese *jia*, and many students therefore think that *home* and *house* can be used interchangeably under all circumstances; they fail to see the different connotations each of these words carries. An English-English dictionary can help them differentiate between the two words.

2. I often help my students distinguish four dimensions of meaning for an English word: (*a*) its denotation and its contextualized meaning; (*b*) its connotation, or associations which gather around the word by long usage; (*c*) its stylistic character; (*d*) its cultural significance. The last one—cultural significance—is of particular importance in the teaching and learning of English as a foreign language, for it is in this area that we find what might be called "culturally loaded words." A ready example is the word *orphan*. In English culture, an *orphan* is a person (especially a child) lacking one or both parents, but in Chinese culture, an *orphan* is a child whose parents are dead or whose *father* is dead; hence a child in China whose mother is dead cannot be called an *orphan* in the real sense of this English word. So, to Chinese learners of English, the word *orphan* is a culturally loaded word. Let's now examine the four dimensions of the word *eclectic:*



(*a*) of people, methods, ideas (etc.), not following any one system or set of ideas, but using parts of many different ones

(*b*) often associated with philosophers; selecting from each school of thought such doctrines as suit one's purpose

(*c*) a formal word, often used in academic discussions

(*d*) In English culture it is a word with a neutral sense, and there is nothing wrong with being eclectic. In Chinese culture it is often used as a derogatory political term.

It is not difficult to see from the above analysis that the teaching of vocabulary can never be separated from the teaching of the culture of the target language. In this connection, a mere word-for-word translation is far from enough; we should watch out for the culturally loaded words and see to it that the students are constantly and authentically informed about the cultural patterns of the target language.

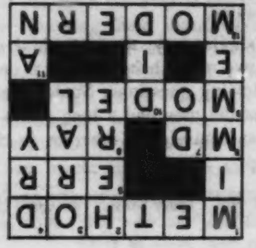
3. Since each culture has a unique pattern, the behavior of the English-speaking peoples, linguistic or otherwise, is also unique. I therefore often furnish my students, in the course of teaching vocabulary, with the relevant background information about American and British history and geography, and the customs and habits of the American and British peoples; I also give them necessary briefings on the English Bible and Christianity, though none of us are believers, for in the English language there are numerous words with religious connotations.

In distinguishing between *pork* and *pig*, for instance, I gave my students a thumbnail account of the Norman Conquest in English history; in explaining the sentence *Mr. Jones's business was on the rocks,* I not only told them that the sentence means Mr. Jones's business was losing money and was almost ruined, but I also digressed from the subject and told them something about the drinking habits of the American people—that they often like their drinks on the rocks—that is, chilled by being poured over ice cubes in the glass. Digression is generally to be avoided, but I see no harm in it if it provides some information about western culture to my students, whose deep-rooted oriental culture often restricts their comprehension of what they read. Apart from class activities, I recommend valuable reference books on American and British culture to help my students inject a new way of thinking into their firmly fixed behavior patterns.

The teacher's need

In foreign-language learning two languages—and indeed two cultures—come into contact. Any teaching method that smacks of bias or prejudice against the culture of the target language will certainly be a hindrance to teaching that language. One needs a cultured mind if one wants to teach or learn English as a foreign language; so does an Englishman who wants to learn Chinese. ☐

solution to crossword puzzle



INDIA

Why Not Try Self-Selection?

Bir Singh

College of Education, Dewas

What should a teacher do when his students have no interest in reading?

This was the question faced by student teachers of the College of Education, Dewas, during the academic year 1977–78, who were teaching English in local secondary schools under the college's practice-teaching program.

Beginning the experiment

In discussing the problem of how to make reading interesting, the student teachers decided to follow the advice of experienced teachers and researchers who suggested that a program of self-selection of reading materials should be used to create interest in reading on the part of the pupils. Trying out this approach, they allowed the pupils to choose the material they wanted to read in their regular periods of reading instruction.

The student teachers were aware that such an individualized approach to reading could succeed only if a sufficient number of books and other reading material on a variety of subjects were made available to the pupils. Every effort was made to fulfill this need. Books of varying degrees of difficulty, capable of meeting the requirements of pupils with widely different reading competencies, were collected from various sources and made available to the pupils.

After some experience and further discussion, the student teachers agreed that there was no one best way of handling a self-selection program that could be prescribed for every teacher. Each teacher must find the way that worked best for him; he must work out the details according to his particular circumstances. Some teachers placed in the front of the classroom a board containing a card for each pupil. On the card the pupil wrote his name, the title of the book, the author's name, the number of pages in the book, a brief note giving the pupil's reason for selecting the book, and his plan for reporting on the book.

The pupils were encouraged to read individually for some time every week, along the lines of their individual needs and interests. The teacher kept a record card for each pupil, which contained information about the books read and the pupil's vocabulary and comprehension needs. The teacher then planned instruction in the needed skills.

The student teachers experienced considerable difficulty in collecting a large variety of reading material. Not all the needed material was available in school libraries. They therefore had to call on all their resourcefulness and ingenuity to solve the problem. Some of them encouraged their pupils to bring books and other reading material from home, and to share that material with the rest of the class.

As a result of all these efforts, the program began to succeed, but progress was very slow. The teachers were, however, very diligent in making useful notes on their experiences, and these were later used to make the program more effective.

Discovering pupils' interests

In some cases, the teachers prepared a list of preferred books and, using this, attempted to discover their pupils' interests. This experiment revealed that the pupils liked hero stories, pioneer stories, love stories, hunting stories, stories about teen-age problems, books on sports, science fiction, religious stories, etc. Other means of determining the pupils' interests included the use of interest inventories, personal interviews, diary records of books, magazines, and newspapers read by the pupils over a given period of time, case studies, and records of books borrowed from libraries. A few teachers preferred to interview pupils informally.

Lists of the pupils' interests were sent to libraries accessible to them, so that an adequate number of books of the types desired could be made available for various grade levels. Some teachers encouraged their students to visit the school library and local libraries to look for books that accorded with their interests.

A number of teachers found that discovering the interests of a retarded reader and supplying him with appropriate books and other material on his reading level brought considerable success to remedial work by utilizing the strong motivational force of interest.

Some teachers used a notebook, with a separate page for each child, in which they listed difficulties, the date for each book the pupil read, the title of the book, and the page on which each difficulty was encountered.

Sometimes the teachers had the pupils dramatize the stories they read. The scripts for the parts to be played were written by pupil leaders on slips of paper, and the players learned them for subsequent dramatization. This device encouraged the pupils to read more and more books, and the teacher was able to devote more time to individual pupils, and thus provide for their individual needs more effectively.

During one of the student teachers' discussions it was brought out that they must not only satisfy a pupil's current interests, they must also be on the alert to promote additional interests appropriate to his level of maturity. Interests should expand with age, and in certain areas they should be intensified. The teachers made use of a variety of devices to guide their pupils' interests in new directions.

An effective approach

This approach to the teaching of reading enabled many sincere student teachers to individ-

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ualize their reading program; to improve the pupils' skills and attitudes, and increase their knowledge; and to develop their pupils' interests in many directions, as materials and ideas were shared with one another.

This is, of course, not a novel technique. Many good teachers of English have applied and are applying this technique for teaching reading successfully in their own ways. I hope that others, too, will try it, in order to meet their pupils' individual needs more effectively and to enable them to take delight in reading many books, according to their individual interests, as well as to eliminate hosts of discipline problems from their classes.

ISRAEL

Using Content Questions as Motivators for Reading

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The Ministry of Education

Reading articles and stories in a foreign language is a task that many students shun and fear. The longer and more complicated the text, the greater their apprehension—an apprehension that causes yet greater inhibition because it tends to interfere with the students' reasoning power, as well as adding to their negative motivation.

If students are to acquire competence and confidence in tackling reading material, and to develop comprehension skills in an orderly way, training toward these goals must begin in the earliest stages of their foreign-language study.

Finocchiaro (1969)[1] mentions five stages of development in training for reading comprehension:

1. The students learn to read texts they know from their oral work.
2. The students are presented with texts comprised of words and structures they have learned, recombined into stories and other kinds of reading passages.
3. At the next stage, pupils are assumed to be able to read on their own passages that contain some unfamiliar language material.
4. After becoming accustomed to reading and comprehending the kind of materials mentioned so far, the students should be given simplified versions of authentic reading texts. The fact that the contents of such materials are known to the readers is seen as a motivating factor, since it makes comprehension easier.
5. Later on, students should, to a great extent, decide themselves what they want to read and should make use of the great amount of reading material available.

All this sounds relatively simple, but there must be a catch somewhere; otherwise, there would not be so many students who do their best to avoid reading unfamiliar texts in the foreign language.

A number of devices are used by textbook writers to further students' ability to comprehend reading material:

1. Exercises that ask about the "leading characters"—so-called *who* questions.
2. Exercises that ask about the *when* and *where* of the action.
3. Exercises that direct the reader toward sentences containing particular lexical items.
4. Exercises that demand true/false responses.

It occurred to me that some of the students' fear of grappling with "unseen" texts might be avoided if the unknown could be made more familiar without actually giving away the content of the story and thus decreasing motivation.

I decided to use content questions—usually used to test comprehension after a story has been read—as motivators: the students were asked to study these questions before tackling the "unseen" piece of reading.

This kind of approach seems particularly justified, since much of the material the students read is followed by questions that lead the reader toward a particular approach to the material.

If students are trained to look at the questions as possible content clues, they soon discover that the questions reveal a great many facts about the material. In like manner, students should be trained to anticipate the contents of a story or passage from its title.

To illustrate the procedure and its possible outcome, I present two reading passages written for foreign-language lessons. The first is taken from the booklet *Funny Stories*, by H.I. Hill.[2]

The students are presented with the following items:

a. The name of the passage: *A Funny Story*

b. Seven lead and follow-up questions:

1. Where did the two travelers stay in the city?
2. How do people ascend to the thirty-ninth floor of a building?
3. Why did the two travelers not use the lift when they returned to the hotel at night?
4. Why did the men leave their heavy coats in the hall on the first floor of the hotel?
5. Why did they decide to sing and tell stories as they climbed to the thirty-ninth floor?
6. What did they remember when they had reached the thirty-eighth floor?
7. Why is this called a "funny story"?

"Discovering" a story with the help of the analysis of content questions

First, the title of the story is examined for "content clues." What does it tell us? The story we are reading right now does not have a title that "gives away" its contents, but we can see that the writer thinks the story is going to make the readers laugh.

Next, we scan the questions. Are there any we do not understand? After having verified that every student understands the questions, we start trying to guess what the story might be about. It seems that it tells about two friends and an incident that happened to them while staying in the city. All this we learn from reading the questions before we read the story, and without trying to surmise what the answers might be.

Stage three finds us examining the questions one by one, trying to guess what the answer might be:

1. Where do people stay when they are away from home? Question 4 tells us that the travelers stayed in a hotel.
2. Question 2 can be answered with the help of question 3.
3. We find no hint as to the answer to question 3.
4. The answer to question 4 is not found by looking at the other questions, but we might think of reasons for the men's behavior.

In a similar way, we try to think of reasons for the two men's behavior as it is described in the following questions. Students might suggest that the men had a long climb and were trying to amuse each other or to cheer each other up.

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[1] Mary Finocchiaro, *Teaching English as a Second Language* (New York: Harper and Row, 1969).

[2] H.I. Hill, "Funny Stories," in *Oxford Graded Readers, Senior Level*, Vol. I, ed. by H.I. Hill (London: Oxford University Press, 1972), pp. 8–9.

Trying to guess what they had forgotten in their coats, one of the students might suggest the key to their room. This suggestion is duly noted, along with other suggestions. *The teacher refrains from accepting or refusing any of the suggestions made.*

After discussing hints, clues, and possibilities, students and teacher open the book. Returning to question 1, the students are asked to look for the answer in the text. At this time the story is no longer conceived as "unseen."

This approach will help build up the students' motivation toward reading some of the many amusing simplified materials that are available. As an illustration, I am going to discuss the approach to a story taken from a collection entitled *Modern Short Stories by American Authors*. This little volume contains seventeen short stories, each comprising no more than two-and-a-half to three pages of print. The sentences are short and simply structured. Words and expressions that might have to be explained appear in exercise form at the end of each of the stories.

Since our objective is the furthering of "unseen" reading, we can refrain from stressing those exercises, dealing with expressions only if they constitute "keywords."

The story in question is "The Wrong House," by J.N. Young, pp. 79–83 in the book mentioned.[3]

The story is introduced with the help of the following questions, which are dealt with *before* reading the passage.

1. What were Hasty and Blackie doing near the dark house at night?
2. Why did they think themselves lucky when they found the house empty?
3. What seemed to indicate that the family who lived there had gone on a long vacation?
4. Why did they have to abandon the car?
5. Where did they hide the suitcase with the money?
6. What did the two men discover when they wanted to return to the house?
7. Who did Hasty claim to be when he telephoned the owner of the house?
8. Why is the story called "The Wrong House"?

a. Check whether the students understand the questions.

The words *indicate*, *long*, *abandon*, *suitcase*, and *discover* might be unfamiliar, but we should find out, with the help of the students, whether *not knowing* these items would prevent a reader from understanding the question or the story. Looking at question 3, in some cases we would "get the message" even if we didn't understand the word. Since we wish to train our students in the art of intelligent guessing, we would invite them to surmise what the meaning of the word appearing in its given context might be. The students are likely to come up with suggestions that are quite close to the real meaning.

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It is important to train our students in the art of guessing intelligently, and to make them aware that while reading for general comprehension the reader should refrain from wanting to "translate," and should try instead to get the meaning of what is being presented.

b. An examination of the title of the story shows that a house seems to play an important part in the story and that something is "wrong" with that house.

c. A study of the questions discloses that the house is mentioned in questions 1, 2, 3, 6, and 7: Two persons, the only ones mentioned by name in the questions, are near the house at night (1). The house is empty (2), and there are signs that the inhabitants are away on vacation (3). In question (6), we discover that the men left the house again but wish to return. They speak to the owner of the house, pretending to be what they are not (7). Questions 4 and 5 reveal that the men abandoned a car and hid a suitcase filled with money. All these facts are available to whoever bothers to read the questions, without even trying to guess what the answers might be.

d. We try to compose a story, using only such clues as we have been able to gather from the questions: Two men are near a dark house at night. We understand that they entered the uninhabited house and are pleased to find that the owners are away on vacation. We know that these men abandoned their car and have a suitcase full of money, which they hide somewhere.

The students will, by now, voice opinions about the nature of Hasty's and Blackie's profession. The students do not know what the two men discovered, nor what they told the owner of the "wrong" house, but at this stage they are usually eager to find out, and they are ready to do so by reading the now "familiar" story. (A synopsis of the story is given below.)

As students begin to lose their fear of unfamiliar reading material, the teacher can gradually reduce the content clues carried by the questions.

Later, students should be trained to make up questions of their own, aimed at discovering the main characters and/or ideas in a passage to be read.

SYNOPSIS OF "THE WRONG HOUSE," BY J.N. YOUNG

Hasty and Blackie succeeded in robbing a large sum of money, but while trying to get away with the money they had the bad luck of running over a policeman. They tried to flee, but had to leave their car after its gasoline tank had been hit by a bullet.

The two robbers knew very little about the town they were in, and decided to hide the money in an uninhabited house till they could buy another car. The house they broke into looked as if its owners were on a lengthy vacation. They hid the suitcase with the money in the coal-cellar and left the house at dawn, to buy the car.

When the two returned to the house, they discovered that the inhabitants had returned. Hasty decided to telephone the owner of the house and tell him that the police believed stolen money was hidden in his house. Two plainclothesmen[4] would come and look for the money.

The owner of the house permitted the pair to "find" the money, but, when they wanted to leave, policemen appeared and arrested the two. The "wrong house" belonged to the local Chief of Police.

ITALY

How to Develop Reading Skills

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Many of the skills and strategies that students need to help them understand written texts in English—skimming, looking for specific information, interpreting cues, making use of graphic, syntactic, and semantic knowledge in guessing or predicting, and making inferences and deductions—are skills they have already acquired and developed through reading in their mother tongue. There are, however, certain skills that are closely connected with the foreign language itself, and which therefore must be specifically taught.

For example, if a student is to glance through a text in order to find the writer's opinion about a certain matter, he can do this more quickly and efficiently if he knows that English provides appropriate expressions for this purpose, such as *in short*, *in conclusion*, *in brief*, *we may say that*, *we may conclude by saying that*, etc. Again, if he is asked to state the sequence in which certain events have taken place, he can be helped by a knowledge of adverbs like *first*, *then*, *eventually*, etc.

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[3] J.N. Young, "The Wrong House," in *Modern Short Stories by American Authors*, ed. by R.J. Dixson (New York: Regents, 1950), pp. 79–83.

[4] EDITOR'S NOTE: plainclothesmen = city policemen of a relatively high rank (detectives) who work in civilian clothes.

Understanding a text also depends on the reader's ability to link words together in groups. The teacher can train his students in this skill by giving them specific exercises requiring them to divide sentences into smaller units.

Recognizing rhetorical devices

The teacher should also show his students how to recognize the various functions of different paragraphs by making them aware of certain rhetorical aids used in writing. The commonest of these aids are the syntactic links used to introduce specific cases. For example, expressions such as *like, as, so, than,* and *unlike* generally appear in paragraphs expressing comparison, while contrasts are usually introduced by *but, conversely, despite, in spite of, however, nevertheless, on the other hand, whereas,* and *while,* and exemplifications by expressions like *for example, for instance, in other words, such as, that is,* etc. Once the teacher has presented these links, he may check his students' assimilation of them by asking them to introduce the right linking words into a passage with blanks, or to join two or more sentences, using appropriate expressions.

Another way to recognize the function of a passage is by analyzing it. Paragraphs that perform the same function are usually made up of similar parts. For example, a general definition usually begins by assigning the object being defined to a certain category, and is completed by a specification of its characteristics and uses; e.g., *Aluminum is a metal / which is light in weight and easily shaped. A lathe is a machine / that turns a piece of wood or metal around and around against a tool that gives it shape.* Similarly, deductions are usually preceded by two statements: the affirmation of a general rule, and the presentation of the characteristics of a particular element that does or does not follow that rule, thus evoking the deduction; for example, *Objects do not float unless their density is smaller than that of water. The density of iron is greater than that of water. Therefore, iron does not float.*

Learning to predict

The ability to predict, which is so important for successful reading, can be developed if the teacher continually questions his students about their expectations regarding the contents of the passage, not only when they see the title, but also after they have read part of the text. If he has made them aware of the value of conjunctions, he may also inquire as to the expectations evoked by expressions such as *but, therefore, likewise, in other words, in order to,* etc.

Another exercise that can help students develop the ability to predict is to have them complete partially formed sentences or to suggest possible conclusions to a story after reading part of it. If the teacher is more interested in developing syntactic expectations, he can give his students a partially formed sentence and ask them to give not one but all the possible elements that might follow. For example, if students were asked to say which elements might appear after *He came to . . . ,* they would be right in suggesting a possessive adjective, a demonstrative adjective or pronoun, or an indefinite or definite article, but they would be wrong if they suggested a preposition or conjunction.[1]

Another exercise that can help to develop the skill of predicting is to have a student complete a text by inserting into the spaces provided the words he thinks most suitable. For example:

> I have just got your l________. Thank you for all the i________ you gave me about yourself and your f________. I shall be very h________ to come and w________ as an *au pair*[2] with you during the s________.

Aids to understanding word meanings

One of the skills that a competent reader most needs is the ability to understand the meanings of new words from their contexts. There are numerous ways in which a teacher can help his students acquire this skill. One of them is to get them to realize when the definition of a new word is clearly given in the text or may be deduced from it. For example, the two following sentences define the words *reaping* and *slender* by means of synonyms and antonyms: (1) *We then started reaping, that is, cutting and gathering the crop.* (2) *She is not at all slender; in fact, she is clumsy and thick-bodied.*

Another activity that teachers may find useful is to introduce to their students the value of prefixes and suffixes, and the rules regarding the formation of compound nouns. For example, a student who has learned that the prefix *over-* is often used to express excess, and who already knows the meaning of the verb *to charge,* should not have any difficulty in guessing the correct definition of the verb *to overcharge.* Similarly, when he has learned that a noun specifying another noun usually precedes it, there should be no problem in understanding sentences like *The blood pressure control instrument was broken.*

Other useful skills

Another important piece of knowledge that a student should keep in mind concerns cohesion aids.[3] The teacher should help his students to recognize these in their various forms and to find their referents in the text whenever they encounter them. For example:

> Find the referents for the words underlined in the text:
>
> 1. I drive better than he does.
> 2. I'm not going to tell you because I don't want to.
> 3. John and Paul are too quiet; they must be up to something.

Another skill that a good reader must possess is the ability to make deductions—that is, to understand what is not clearly expressed by the text, but may be inferred from it. This is a difficult skill to acquire, because it not only implies a certain linguistic competence, but also an understanding of the cultural world of the writer. Such is the case in the sentence *Arthur carefully closed all the windows in the kitchen, locked the door, and turned on the gas in the oven,*[4] in which the reader is expected to recognize an attempted suicide.

The following dialogue provides another example:

> A: Can you go to Edinburgh tomorrow?
> B: BEA is on strike.[5]

Only if the reader knows that BEA is an airline will he understand that B is not able to go to Edinburgh because there are no flights available on the following day.

This skill of making deductions should be practiced in class from the elementary stage onward, by having the students deduce facts from the sentences they are reading. For example, an easy sentence like *The teacher's wife is a lawyer* may provide a good opportunity to ask the students whether the teacher is a man or a woman. Similarly, the sentence *John should have written to Mary* should lead to the question *Did John write to Mary or not?*

A further activity that students are often asked to perform after they have reached the complete comprehension of a text is to evalu-

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[1] EDITOR'S NOTE: The author's statement refers correctly to the usual (verb and preposition) meaning of *came to* as "arrived at." The perceptive reader may rightly note that the idiomatic use of *came to* as "regained consciousness" might very well be followed by a preposition or conjunction.

[2] EDITOR'S NOTE: *Au pair:* a young person, usually a foreign student, who lives with a family, receiving room and board in exchange for helping with household duties.

[3] For a detailed study of cohesion aids, cf. Halliday and Hasan, *Cohesion in English,* (London: Longman, 1976), and Joe D. Palmer, "How a Paragraph Hangs Together," *English Teaching Forum, 18,* 2 (April 1980), pp. 16–19.

[4] This example is taken from Davies and Widdowson, "Reading and Writing," *Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1975), vol. 3, p. 175.

[5] This is an adaptation of Widdowson's example in *Explorations in Applied Linguistics* (London: Oxford University Press, 1979), p. 96.

ate its contents—that is, to say whether they agree with the opinions expressed in the text or whether they consider the information given correct or useful. In order to develop this skill in class a teacher should often ask his students to express personal judgments about what they have read, justifying their answers with examples taken from the text.

The choice of texts

As a conclusion, I will mention a few points regarding the choice of the texts proposed as reading material.

1. The material should appeal to the students who are to read it.
2. It should not be too heavily culture-laden or carry too many assumptions unknown to the students.
3. The language level of the texts should be suited to the students' linguistic competence.
4. Before tackling a text, students should clearly keep in mind why they are going to read it, so they can adopt the most suitable strategy.
5. The teacher should encourage his students to read a lot outside the classroom. This will teach them that reading is a useful and rewarding experience that can provide them with a wealth of interesting information in a pleasant way.

In guiding his students toward competent reading, the teacher will be giving them not only a useful tool to use in class, but also a resource to be enjoyed in their spare time, and which will remain with them long after the completion of their foreign-language course.

PERU

Are We Correcting or "Killing" Our Students?

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When I began to teach English in a primary school in 1970, I had not had much experience in dealing with students' errors. I just laughed when they made them, or I corrected them in a thoughtless way. I did not realize that I was really "killing" my students more than correcting them. I am writing this in the hope that it may help any teachers who may be using the same techniques that I used ten years ago.

Students who make mistakes really do need help. The majority of students in our high schools think that English is a very difficult subject, and we, as their teachers, must be concerned with encouraging them from the very beginning, and helping them to be properly motivated to succeed in this subject, which is important to their future. When we enter the classroom we should let our students feel that we are their friend—that we are not going to laugh at them when they make mistakes but are going to help them in such a way that they will scarcely be aware of being corrected.

Correcting students without letting them know they are being corrected

When students are learning the past tense of regular and irregular verbs they commonly make mistakes like *I goed to Lima yesterday*. Many teachers would correct the students by saying "You mean, 'You went to Lima,' " and the student will feel a little uncomfortable; he will "feel" the correction. But if the teacher says, instead, "Oh yes, you *went* to Lima yesterday," the student will "feel" quite good. I have been amazed to find that, after this "treatment," the student will usually be able to say, "I *went* to the park, too." What I would like to emphasize is that the teacher has not actually told the student that he was mistaken. He has only said, "Oh yes, you *went* to Lima yesterday, and then "You *went* to the park." The student realizes that the correct form is *went*, not *goed*.

We can use this same procedure when we teach the simple present tense. Students tend to say "He *play* the piano." In this situation, the teacher can say, "Oh yes, he *plays* the guitar, too, and Silvia *plays* the accordion." I have found that the student will say, correctly, "He plays the piano every day," because the correction has not "killed" him but has motivated him to make his own correction.

Using visual aids to reinforce corrections

The flannel board can be useful in helping to reinforce correct forms. First, I ask my students to make flash cards for the different words in the sentence, as is illustrated below.

PETER PLAYS FOOTBALL EVERY DAY

WE WENT TO LIMA YESTERDAY

SUSAN DID NOT WORK HERE etc.

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When the flash cards are ready, I jumble them and give them to the students, who must arrange them to form an appropriate answer to the question I ask them. Then they go to the flannel board. For example, if I ask "What does Peter play?," the student puts on the flannel board *Peter plays football*. Then I ask the whole class to repeat this answer. Sometimes, I ask my students to make flash cards of each letter of certain English verbs:

P L A Y S, S T U D Y,

S T U D I E S etc.

In doing this, the student is not only talking (he answers the questions orally), but he is looking at the flash cards and realizing that the verb has an *-s* in the third person when used to describe daily activities. This cutting up of the different letters of the verb is particularly useful when the students are asked to change a sentence to the interrogative form, i.e.,

DOES HE P L A Y

FOOTBALL EVERY DAY ?

We know how difficult it is to teach Spanish speakers the use of DO and DOES in questions and negative statements. The technique described above is very helpful: it really works.

Group contests that increase motivation and lessen errors

I usually divide the class into five groups of six students each (my classes have thirty students). The students in each group are carefully selected according to their ability in English; that is, two students in each group are very good in English (they are the leaders), two are average students, and the other two are weaker ones. I tell the leaders how the members of the group are to correct one another.

After I have divided the class into groups, I organize different "contests" which are run not just by me but by the students themselves. Extra points are given to the groups that participate more actively in class. An important feature of this activity is that the students correct themselves in order to gain more points for their group. I even subtract points when I see a student correcting a member of his group in a way different from that which I have explained to them.

The students work quite happily in this way, and they do not notice when they are corrected. The students like the English language, and they think that the "game" is so interesting that they try hard to gain more points for their team, when in reality what they are doing is learning English.

SPAIN

How I Use Songs

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As every teacher knows, variety is one of the most important factors in maintaining a high level of motivation and interest among your students. Finding ways to vary the presentation or review of language material can be a big challenge. Yet there are many "real life" activities that can be brought into the classroom to add variety not only to the learning process but also to the students' experience in English. One of these activities is songs.

Why use songs?

Besides being enjoyable for both teacher and students, well-chosen songs can provide excellent practice in pronunciation, stress, rhythm, and intonation, as well as sentence patterns and vocabulary review.

As early as 1588, the English writer William Byrd, in his "Sonets and Songs of Sadness and Pitie" wrote:

> reasons briefly set downe . . . to perswade every-one to learne to sing. . . . It is a singular good remedie for a stutting & stammering in the speech. . . . It is the best meanes to procure a perfect pronunciation & to make a good Orator.[1]

While we may not wish to make such grandiose claims, we must recognize that a song

- adds variety to a lesson.
- adds to the enjoyment of learning the language and therefore aids motivation.
- is a natural choral language activity, unlike the choral repetition of dialogues or drills.
- involves the whole class and promotes maximum participation.
- helps learners remember language. (Remind the students later of the melody, and this will nearly always bring back the words.)
- provides valuable reinforcement of language learned.

Teachers who use songs may do so for any of the following reasons:

a. They want to teach a certain song because they like it or their students like it, in which case learning the song is all that matters.

b. They look for a specific structure or teaching point in the lyrics of a song, and use it to present or to review this point.

c. They find a link with the theme or situation of a lesson, matching, for example, textbook passages on women's lib with a song like Brian Abbs's "The Unhappy Housewife."

I would like to give you two examples of how I use songs for purposes *b* and *c* above.

A review of the simple past

Usually I give the students a sheet on which the words of a song are written, but with several blanks that they must fill in as they listen to the song. Of course, the blanks correspond to words the students know, and which may be heard clearly on the tape. When the students have heard the song and filled in the blanks, I write the missing words on the blackboard so they can check them.

My first example shows how I use a song to review the simple past. Here is the plan for this part of the lesson:

ACTIVITY	AIM	MATERIAL
Listening	Review of past Comprehension	Rocky Raccoon (tape)—Beatles
Writing	Simple past	Writing sheets with instructions

Writing Sheet

You are going to listen to a song by the Beatles called "Rocky Raccoon." There may be some words that you don't understand. DON'T WORRY. Just listen to the song and try to understand the story.

Now, in your groups choose the right answers *a, b, c* below.

Once upon a time
(a) a young woman
(b) a young boy
(c) a young child
left her boyfriend called
(a) Magill
(b) Dan
(c) Rocky

and ran off with another person called
(a) Magill.
(b) Dan.
(c) Rocky.
Her old boyfriend got very angry

about this and decided to go out and shoot at
(a) his old girlfriend.
(b) the new boyfriend.
(c) Both A and B.
Unfortunately,

(a) Danny shot Rocky.
(b) Rocky shot Nancy.
(c) Rocky shot Danny.
A doctor came in, and
(a) we know Rocky died.
(b) we know they all lived.
(c) we don't know if anyone died.

Here are three more questions. Answer them in groups.

1. In what part of America did this happen?
2. Where did the shooting incident happen?
3. The girl had three names:
   a. She called herself ____________.
   b. Other people called her ____________.
   c. Her *real* name was ____________.

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[1] Editor's Note: See "If You Feel Like Singing . . ." by Alice H. Osman and Jean McConochie, in the October 1978 issue of the Forum, page 2. Rendered in modern spelling: "reasons briefly set down . . . to persuade everyone to learn to sing . . .: It is a singular[ly] good remedy for a stuttering and stammering in the speech. . . . It is the best means to procure a perfect pronunciation and to make a good orator."

Finally, fill in the blanks below (the first few lines of the song).

Now ________ in the black ________ hills of ________, there ________
a young boy ________ Rocky Raccoon. And one day his woman ________
________ with another ________. Hit Rocky ________ the ________
Rocky didn't like that. He said I'm ________ get that ________!

Matching the theme of a lesson

I have used the second song in conjunction with a text about "freedom." The outline of the lesson is as follows:

	ACTIVITY	AIM	MATERIALS
1	Reading	Intensive reading • comprehension • preparation for discussion	"Off on Her Own" (text) List of questions
2	Reading / Listening	Aural recognition of material read earlier	Lyrics "She's leaving home" (tape) List of questions
3	Speaking	Discussion	Freedom

I will develop only the second point of this lesson plan. I hand out to the students a sheet with instructions on what to do, and the lyrics, and questions to answer.

Instructions

Read the text of this song very quickly. Then listen to the tape without looking at the text, and discuss it in your group. Think of two questions you might put to other groups about it afterwards.

Then answer these questions:

1. At what time and on what day is the girl leaving home?
2. Does she leave anything for her parents to find?
3. Which door is she leaving by?
4. What do her parents say they gave her?
5. What has her life at home been like for many years?
6. Who finds the letter? Where?
7. Is it a shock to her?
8. Where is the father at that moment?
9. Did the parents have an easy life?
10. What's the girl doing at nine o'clock Friday morning?
11. Who did she make an appointment with?
12. Do the parents know they did anything wrong?
13. What is the one thing money can't buy?
14. Had the girl had much fun in her life?

Some words of advice

There are three important factors to keep in mind when you choose a song as part of a lesson:

1. The quality of the recording and the clarity of the singer's voice. Some singers are difficult to understand even by their fellow countrymen.

2. The kind of language in the lyrics, since it is quite common to find odd English constructions in pop songs.

3. The popularity of the song. Because of the relatively short life of a "top of the pops," teachers must constantly renew their repertory, in order to be up to date with the latest "hits." Therefore it is useful to have in stock a few "classics" such as the Beatles, Baez, etc., that can be used at different times.

Above all, don't regard a song as an "easy option." To obtain the maximum value from a song, and to integrate it into a lesson or course, the teacher must prepare, present, and practice it in the same way he would any other teaching material.

Once the review or lesson plan is finished, join in the singing and encourage your students to do so as well.

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UNITED STATES

Reaching the Reader through the Writer: Tapping the Imagination in Advanced ESL Composition

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Many of us who have taught upper-level composition courses have resisted turning the classes into a grammar review: there is something in our humanistic backgrounds that rebels against equating composition with the mere reproduction of grammatically correct sentences. Experience has taught us that the carryover from grammar class to the act of writing is haphazard and unpredictable at best, and often nonexistent. Research has likewise indicated that the ability to verbalize rules is not an effective monitor of production (Seliger 1979:354). While few would disagree with the principle that upper-level composition instruction should reinforce previously absorbed grammar rules (Buckingham 1979:244), even fewer have demonstrated effective means of consistently seeing that it does.

It is salutary to remind ourselves that the act of writing (in the sense of free composition) is by its nature creative, its implicit purpose being the induction of a message by the intended audience (Holtzman 1970; Murray, in Cooper and Odell 1978:88). This recognition not only adds a vital dimension to the teaching of composition, but also elevates the potential of the curriculum to something more than a messy surrogate of the grammar class. Does the notion that even transactional writing is expressive imply, then, that there are ways that the teacher of writing at the higher levels can teach writing?

In a recent issue of *Cross Currents*, James Gardner offers a provocative and applicable generality: "Description, storytelling, literature in general are, in large part, dependent on the art of directed imaging. Imaging is a common phenomenon since everyone uses it" (Gardner 1979:66).

Before I knew *image* was a verb, I had arrived at much the same conclusion—that coherent, vivid writing consists of concrete images which cannot be summoned by rules (however, see Young, Becker, and Pike 1970) and which, before their realization, are free-floating bits of the writer's own experience. Our students' too frequent glazed eyes and mental vacations suggest a vivid imaginative life, yet I often note a listlessness and lack of concreteness in their writing which is not al-

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This article originally appeared in *Cross Currents*, a publication of the Language Institute of Japan, Vol. VII, No. 2. © *Cross Currents*, 1980.

ways attributable to their thin lexicon. Keeping in mind that these were advanced students, I began to ask myself whether, like American students (see Murray, in Cooper and Odell 1978:92), foreigners could be taught that concreteness, rather than abstractions weakly laboring the same ideas, helps them bring a sense of greater message to the reader. To try to demonstrate the point, I reproduced a composite student passage of a previous assignment. I underlined certain correct but vague and shapeless words and phrases which I felt were replaceable within the students' vocabulary:

> Spring is the best season of the year. There are many activities you can do. Also, the weather changes and becomes more pleasant. The scenery becomes more beautiful. People also seem nicer in the spring; in fact, it has been called the season of love.

My instructions upon distributing the composite were to imagine the possible components of the underlined abstractions, to try and capture, if they could, *the original images which had brought them into being*. The next step was simply to write them. Doing this not only fills out a very sketchy passage, but focuses the writer's attention on the varied possibilities of his topic and of his own ideas. "Best" may become "freshest, most promising." The "weather changes" invites a wealth of specifics; "scenery . . . more beautiful" can, even using limited vocabulary, be given more vigorous expression. Even a touch of bombast like "The trees on the high hills explode with color" may be an improvement on the original and is at least evidence that the writer is taking an active approach to his material.

This exercise has the advantage of being based on previous work and is in a sense an editing process. Since it is explicit that the formal correctness of the sentences is not in question, no one is distracted from the imaging process by the invocation of grammar rules. Thus, the exercise becomes even for those who normally write more concretely an opportunity for further practice in thinking and writing at the same time.

Other common topics yield composites with their vagueness more deeply embedded. To concretize these images it is necessary to alter the basic structures. This implies a certain grammatical consciousness, but the focus is clearly on "directed imaging"and the personal aspects of writing. As an example:

> __________ is my favorite city. There are many beautiful places, and in addition, many places that one can enjoy. For this reason, the city attracts many tourists. For people who are more permanent, it offers educational opportunities. Finally, it is a busy commercial center.

The third sentence, in revision, may become "Travelers from as far as New Zealand, Australia, and Japan come to Bali each year for its dancing, festivals, and culture." This is simple, and yet the "tourists" and Bali's "attractions" have acquired a degree of reality. Of course, it should be stressed that exercises like these are not exhortations to write flowery fillers devoid of generality. They are useful simply to suggest psychological approaches to certain blocks caused by vagueness. Consider the total effect of the following student passage, errors included:

> Veing Tan is my favorite city. That is a small mountainous area with a beautiful beach which is usually crowded in summer time. In the morning, from a temple or small house on the slope of a mountain, one can enjoy seeing a beautiful sun rise in the fresh and a little foggy air of the mountains and near-sea region.

Of course, reluctance to write concretely at the word level manifests itself as well at the level of elaboration. Many ESL students repeatedly write correct, but tantalizingly elliptical, sentences. As an antidote to what is perhaps a culturally determined rhetorical interference (Kaplan, in Croft 1980:399; Dehghanpisheh 1979:519), the old fiction adage, "Don't tell them; show them," may sometimes be profitably applied to ESL writing. In this exercise, the student must induce in his reader a conclusion. The following easy sentences must be prefaced with the idea of the student viewing the scene or situation as through a window, which is another way of saying he must engage the reader through imagery. It is forbidden to restate the key sentence, the point being to *show* the reader, using as little abstraction as possible.

1. Sam likes Marie a lot but is afraid to show it.
2. I was bored at the concert.
3. Americans don't care what they eat.

It is a good idea to attempt the first sentence together as a class and to work toward an increasing degree of descriptiveness. For instance, *Sam likes Marie but is afraid to show it* may be placed by the first student volunteer in the narrative present: *Sam and Marie are together in the cafeteria*. The teacher might ask where the student visualizes them, and receive the correction *Sam and Marie are sitting together in the cafeteria*. Another student may volunteer, *Marie is reading a book, and Sam is staring at her nervously*. Here, attentive students will notice that the third sentence has obviated the *together* in the original, so it must be elided to retain coherence in the imagery. *She looks up*, says the next student, *and Sam looks down and blushes*. Here the instructor may want to solicit stylistic or notional transitions.

"Does she just look up once? Is that how you see it?"

"No, every time. Say, 'whenever' she looks up."

"All right. Now, *how* does Sam look down? Can you imagine?"

"Sam looks down secretly, quickly."

The class, then, with some encouragement from the teacher, has created the following: *Sam and Marie are sitting in the cafeteria. Marie is reading a book and Sam is staring at her nervously. Whenever she looks up, Sam looks down quickly and blushes*. In five minutes, they have collectively created a series of images and technically realized them in written English. By thus helping students elaborate at the sentence level, one prepares them for the further fleshing out of the essay using techniques similarly appealing to the writers' imaginative potential.

On a less overtly pictorial level, images also exist. For instance, what comes into the mind if I say,"Inflation has created frustration and hardship for many Americans"?—a man digging into his pocket and frowning at a gas pump, an old lady on a sofa bundled in sweaters, a housewife picking over the leftovers at a meat counter?

Enacting the principle that images exist before abstractions, the students may then try their hand at imaging and organizing explanations more difficult to picture:

4. Farmer Brown is an expert on agriculture.

A student produced in response:

> Farmer Brown likes to plant, and his crops are always good. Everything he plants grows up without difficulty. Most of the markets near his farm are always willing to buy his products, because they are good, nutritious, and liked by everyone. His farm and his products are a success, and there is no bad season for him and his crops.

5. Mr. Bilge cannot be trusted in a business agreement.

This kind of sentence depends entirely on the students' willingness to envision a Mr. Bilge and on their individual conceptions of how an untrustworthy Mr. Bilge would act. In the past, it has given rise to depictions of Mr. Bilge as an intentional crook, a well-meaning but negligent businessman, and a spoiled, rich playboy son of an executive. Given encouragement and examples, most students can infuse these skeletons with at least some spark of specificity and liveliness.

A truly superior student can bridge the gap between foreign-student writing and composition in general:

6. Americans don't care what they eat.

> Walking around the Kell Hall cafeteria one can see people putting some money in a machine and getting out something which looks like a hamburger. It is actually two pieces of well-aged

Howard Clinton Wright has taught English as a second language at the Gam'a Al Fatah in Tripoli, Libya, and in San Sebastian, Spain. At present he is an assistant professor in the ESL program of the College of General Studies, Georgia State University, where he is concentrating on materials development for advanced ESL composition courses.

bread with a drop of ketchup, a drop of mustard, and a transparent slice of meat. You also see people trying to chew ham sandwiches. At first you think they are chewing gum but then you realize they were chewing the same bite for the last ten minutes. I guess the only difference between the sandwich and the gum is that with a sandwich you cannot blow bubbles.

If all students were this good, our jobs would be not only easier and more rewarding, but also superfluous. Most students will continue to need help in the bedrock discipline of learning English structure and grammar. As composition teachers at the university, we can perhaps aid them by dutifully red-penciling their mistakes. We cannot always teach them to think like writers, nor guarantee a carryover of exercise skills into the real world of college composition—but by creating exercises which stress imagination within a form, we can perhaps remind them to think in an active way, and to listen more attentively to themselves, when they are writing.

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ZAIRE

Learning to Read and Reading to Learn

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Since 1977, **Biselela Tshimankinda** has been a lecturer at the Institut Supérieur Pédagogique of Mbujimay in Eastern Kasai, Zaire, teaching American literature and supervising the training of students preparing to become teachers of EFL/ESL. Since July, 1981, he has been head of the English department. He received his degree of "Gradué en Pédagogie Appliqué: Option Anglais et Culture Africaine" from the ISP in 1975, and that of "Licencié Agrégé en Anglais" (the equivalent of the M.A. in TEFL/TESL) in 1977.

The information that most learners of English as a foreign language must acquire through that language is tremendous—far too much for them to acquire if they read word by word. They must read quickly and for (literal meaning that must extend and result in) *inferential meaning*. This is the true purpose of reading.

Context, experience, and comprehension

To reach this goal, the learner must become proficient in *contextual reading* (that is, reading in which he relies on the whole context, and not on individual words, sentences, etc.) in order to extract the message. To rely on contextual clues, and read for meaning, the reader/learner has to know *what* to select from and *how* to deal with the written material he is presented with. Since the components of written material do not all have the same importance in the perception of meaning, the reader must develop a habit of focusing on *semantic* or *information-bearing units*.

Thus, the richer the reader/learner's "experiences," the greater and easier his use of redundancy; and the greater his reliance on contextual clues, the quicker the comprehension. The greater his reliance on the context, and redundancy, the faster the reading rate; the faster this rate, the more imposing the quantity of written material he may read in a given period of time, and the greater the "experiences" (and the circle starts anew).

Learners of English must first *learn to read* (for meaning) in order to *read to learn*. It is in the light of these principles that reading—as a class activity—must be *timed* and *graded* (i.e., at first composed of items, structures, etc., previously encountered). This gradation must diminish in proportion as the learners progress in their apprenticeship in the language. As gradation decreases, improvisation must increase: the more the learners progress in their learning, the more frequent must be the introduction of novel items, structures, and styles, up to the moment the learners are able to cope alone with entirely new material. Timed reading *obliges* learners to read and understand quickly. Graded reading material permits quick reading and easy comprehension.

The place of "expressive reading"

One must read first for meaning, since the fundamental aim of language is communication. Reading aloud (or expressive reading), if it is to be used at all, must come after reading for meaning. Indeed, one reads better (in English) when he understands what he reads. Only thus will he be able to achieve better intonation, stress, rhythm, pauses, emphasis, and the many other "cumulative meanings" not exhibited in the written material.

The teacher's role is to provide a good reading model and check the learner's understanding. Even during expressive reading (which the teacher has to use, from time to time, to correct the learners' use of suprasegmentals, pronunciation, etc.) the teacher has to go on checking the pupils' comprehension of grammatical points, use of vocabulary, etc. The expressive part may also be controlled through questions the learners must answer by using the words of the sentence, passage, etc. But reading aloud must be neither the most important part nor the chief aim of a reading lesson; less time (if any) must be devoted to this type of reading.

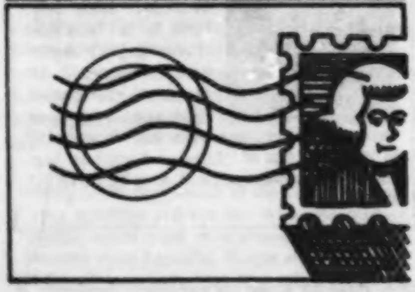
Outside reading

Reading must also be practiced outside of class. The amount of material read in class and the information the learners draw from it do not provide sufficient acquaintance with the English language and culture. This is the reason why outside-of-class reading is of paramount importance.

Home reading is not only important for learners (here I mean pupils, students) but for everyone who speaks and uses English for communication.

The importance of English in this twentieth-century world is known to everyone: many of the books we use today are written in English. Since books are the chief conveyer of knowledge within the reach of many people, it is clear that nonnative speakers of English must keep on reading in order to gain "experiences."

Letters



More on Using Ready-Made Pictures

London, England
26 November 1981

Dear Editor:

I enjoyed reading the article by Marie Ernestová in the October issue of Forum on how to use ready-made pictures. It is always encouraging to know that other teachers find such pictures useful. Ms. Ernestová provides an excellent range of examples in a very well ordered manner.

For other teachers reading this article and wanting to follow up the ideas contained in it, her list of references is obviously useful. However, I would like to point out one error in her list. The film she refers to is not a BBC film, but is one produced in 1975 by the British Council's English Language Teaching Institute in London and is entitled *Using Magazine Pictures in the Language Classroom*. I helped to plan and direct the film with my two colleagues Janet McAlpin and Gill Sturtridge, who both appear as teachers in the film. I enclose a copy of the booklet that the three of us wrote to help teacher trainers exploit the film in workshops.

The film shows Janet and Gill sorting out pictures into the categories that Ms. Ernestová lists on page 5, and then sticking them onto cardboard. Then one sees Janet and Gill in class with their students. Gill teaches *It has been . . . ed* in the way described on pages 6–7, and then Janet uses the large situational picture described on page 7 to practice *He should have. . . .* Later she uses a set of large pictures to review *You might have told me (he plays the violin)* (page 7), and then small pictures to practice the pair-work dialogue on page 8.

I would be grateful if you would correct the reference to the film in the next issue of Forum. Perhaps you could also add a note to say that the film is available on hire or for purchase from British Council offices overseas.

It will also interest you to know that Janet McAlpin has since written a book which includes all the ideas illustrated in the film plus many others. It is called *The Magazine Picture Library* and is published by Heinemann Educational Books, London, in the Practical Language Teaching series that I edit with Gill Sturtridge.

Yours sincerely,
Marion Geddes

A Request for Correspondents

Ackerstr. 34
DDR-3014 Magdeburg
German Democratic Republic
5 December 1981

Dear Editor,

I just got the latest copy of Forum and read your note on the suggestion to include in your magazine a list of teachers who are interested in corresponding with other teachers. As I want to be in that number, I am sitting down to write you this letter, which I will send by express service.

Of course, you will get a lot more letters now, but if you make this experiment a regular part of Forum, it will become quite a normal thing.

I do not know how many details you can include in your list, but I want to give a few about myself: teacher of English and German, thirty-eight years old, interests besides teaching: stamps, music.

I hope Forum will help me to find some friends.

Sincerely yours,
Erwin Schneidereit

Learning English Words

Primary School
1921 Bor
Yugoslavia
10 October 1981

Dear Editor,

First I want to thank you for this remarkable magazine. We teachers of English can always find something in it that interests us, and which is useful for our teaching work. We can also improve our English by reading it.

I teach English to children in primary school, and recently we have discovered several ways to learn English words. While we realize that the language does not mean much without a knowledge of grammatical constructions, without a knowledge of the words it means nothing. Grammar is not the goal, but a way to reach the goal. The words are the base of the language.

The words of a foreign language are difficult for the students, but we can conquer this difficulty if we give enough attention to the words both at school and out of school. However, the teacher has to find useful ways of teaching the words.

Words can be learned by the students in school in a group, in pairs, or individually. They can also be learned at home, on the bus, on the train, or in the waiting room. Here are some ways to learn them:

Groups of students can compete in a kind of quiz. Each group makes a list of words the students have not yet learned, together with their meaning in their own language. Then they exchange the lists of words, and each student in the group must spend five minutes trying to memorize two-thirds of the words. If they memorize fewer than the required number of words, they are penalized one point for each non-memorized word. The group that has the fewest negative points is the winner.

Another way to learn words is as follows: the pupils are divided into three groups, and the blackboard is divided into three parts. Each group writes on their own part of the blackboard as many as they can of the new words they have learned from the previous lesson. The group that has written the most correct words is the winner.

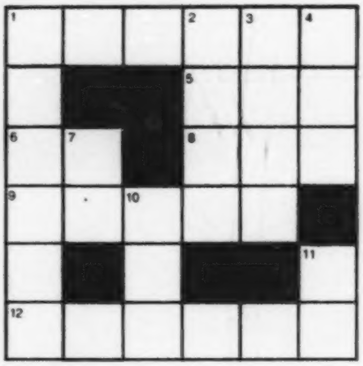
In still another way of learning words, two groups compete. They take turns dictating the words, one by one. The group that has written the most words correctly wins. Drawings and pictures can also be used to represent the words to be written.

Words can be memorized by making two lists on a piece of paper: on the left-hand side a list of English words and on the right-hand side a list of the words in the students' own language. They can be learned by covering first one list and then the other with a piece of paper. The members of the group can help one another memorize them. Then, the two lists can be written in random order, and the students required to connect them or list them in the right order.

These are a few of the ways I have my students learn words. They should also be encouraged to learn words outside of school, with the teacher explaining how to make a list of the words they are to learn. When the students have made the words their own, they can be used in conversations, within the framework of various communicative situations.

Sincerely yours,
Anka Aleksić

"The Lighter Side"



ACROSS

1 A procedure or systematic plan of instruction; way; approach

5 Make a mistake; stray ("To____ is human; to forgive, divine.")

6 Abbreviation for Maryland or doctor of medicine

8 A beam of light radiating from a bright object

9 An example that serves as a pattern for imitation

12 Up to date, contemporary, recent

DOWN

1 Mimicry-memorization (abbreviation)

2 In this place

3 Spoken; uttered by the mouth or in words

4 Not wet

7 Perform; act; execute; carry out (also used as a substitute verb and to express emphasis)

10 Past tense of 7 down

11 Indefinite article

DAFFY DEFINITIONS

Match the words in the right-hand column with the definitions.

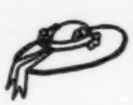
1. A lot of worried people live on this street.
2. What the bald man hopes to do when he sits down and looks in the mirror.
3. What you do to change your hair color (and lose weight?).
4. I tell you, this is the kind of test I always fail.
5. A newspaper that went bankrupt.
6. What you call people who aren't your friends.
7. The question (one of many) to ask yourself when taking a lie-detector test.
8. What you say to a talkative elf who is sitting in a bookcase.
9. A tree that cannot hold a good conversation (or a good relationship).
10. What we hope at least twelve of our students are not doing in their English class.

a. M I LLION
b. S AY
c. DO ZEN
d. A DUL TERY
e. SH ELF
f. EX PRESS
g. N AM ES
h. PESSIMI ST
i. DI ET
j. C HAIR

Adapted from *Media and Methods*, February 1981, as reprinted in *JALT Newsletter* 5, 10 (October 1, 1981)

CHANGE A LETTER

Each picture illustrates a common word. Change one letter of each word to produce the name of an animal. Example: ax–ox

1


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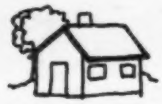

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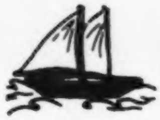

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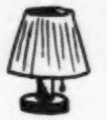

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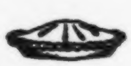

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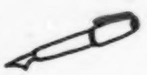

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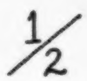

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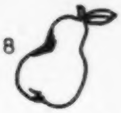

Answers to Change a Letter: 1. hat–cat 2. house–mouse 3. boat–goat 4. lamp–lamb 5. pie–pig 6. pen–hen 7. half–calf 8. pear–bear

Answers to Daffy Definitions: *1h* (pessimist), *2j* (see hair), *3i* (dye it), *4b* (essay), *5f* (ex-press), *6g* (enemies), *7a* (Am I lyin'), *8e* (Ssh, elf!), *9d* (a dull tree), *10c* (dozin').

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THE LIGHTER SIDE inside back cover

Volume XX
October 1982
Number 4

Anne Covell Newton
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Cover design
Graphichouse, Ltd.

Book Reports and the Reading Habit

MICHAEL SMITHIES
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MICHAEL SMITHIES has been professor and head of the Department of Language and Social Science at the Papua New Guinea University of Technology since the end of 1976. He was educated at Oxford, Berkeley, California, and Paris, and has twenty years English teaching experience at universities in Thailand, Cambodia, Hong Kong, and Indonesia. He has published extensively in English language teaching and in Southeast Asian studies, and is well known for his volume *Advanced English Comprehension Texts for Science Students* (London, Cassell, 1972).

It is a universal complaint that students do not read as much as they should. No matter what the country or the language of instruction, the grievance is the same. In developed countries with a large published corpus in the L_1 the situation is clearly different from that in developing countries, where the corpus in professional or technical spheres may not exist in the mother tongue and recourse to literature in an L_2 is necessary. There are obviously more excuses for students not reading as much as they should in the second case: apart from language obstacles, and consequent lower reading speeds, there is the question of availability of texts, the acquisition of the reading habit, the strong oral tradition opposed to a weak written one, and a host of other considerations, ranging from physical environment (availability of light for reading at night, lack of mosquitoes, etc.) to economic circumstances (time to "waste" in reading as opposed to helping parents plant rice, wash clothes, etc.).

In many third-world countries, particularly at the tertiary level, even if the price of books precludes students acquiring the book-buying habit, there is usually a central institute or municipal library from which books may be borrowed, and many are relatively well endowed. Yet teachers in most subjects continue to complain that students do not read enough. If the reading habit, for cultural or economic reasons, has not been acquired by the time students are at the tertiary level, it is not going to be acquired overnight or by osmosis, and some positive steps have to be taken to ensure that books are read.

The problem in developed countries is recognized by a generous body of literature about reading and suggestions for improving the reading habit—inter alia, Sprache (1969), Walker (1969), Fader and McNeil (1966), Chambers (1969). One classic of the kind even starts provocatively "This is a book for readers who cannot read" (Adler 1970). The problem seems more conscientiously tackled in the United States than in Britain, where concern about efficiency in reading appears to be given less overt attention. The question I shall deal with here is not the general area of reading comprehension or the related subject of speed reading, but the more limited matter of trying to foster the reading habit in third-world countries by requiring some feedback on reading undertaken.

Language teachers in both second- and foreign-language situations, to whom falls the task of imparting a considerable number of study skills that are not merely linguistic (e.g., dictionary use, report writing, speech making, etc.), can take the initiative by requiring that books be read, and—in order to check that they have been read—reported on.

What books should be read?

The first question the language teacher must ask is what books are to be read. Assuming that most people read in English for what they can get out of it, either in professional knowledge or in relaxation, these are two self-made categories of reading material. They are not the only ones, of course; some students have a particular interest in subjects unrelated to their field of study, and such interests should certainly not be overridden by requiring students to read only professional books or novels.

One common cry is that many of the books available in professional areas are at too difficult a linguistic or conceptual level for the students. If that is so, the obvious answer is that someone, sometime, has to sit down and write books that are appropriate. It is no good expecting a volume to appear miraculously from the heavens, and publishers, being businessmen, can soon determine the potential or otherwise of a market for a possible text. In some countries there is a tendency for staff, who have taken higher degrees abroad, to prescribe the texts they themselves studied from, regardless of the fact that these texts were intended for native speakers brought up in a different educational tradition and at a different level. In some EFL countries there is a sufficient market to justify the translation of such basic texts; it is therefore most probable that in ESL countries there are grounds for the production of a simplified version of the original. This raises the question of standards in such situations; the fact that the linguistic fluency and consequent reading ability of a native speaker of English is different from that of a speaker of English as a second or other language is, however, inescapable, and concessions, particularly at the undergraduate level, are inevitable. This may not be an acceptable idea in all circles: a speaker at a 1962 Cambridge conference on teaching English literature overseas scandalized many participants by stating, "If they are not capable of appreciating the best, give them the second best." However, there seems much healthy realism rather than jaded cynicism in this remark.

Advantages of the "second best"

Reading for relaxation clearly has to be encouraged, for this is at the root of the reading habit. In this matter the second best is certainly much more likely to be of interest to students than the best. A three-decker nineteenth-century novel of undisputed worth is not going to be preferred by our average twentieth-century student to a thin paperback with a provocative cover. Length is an important consideration. The longer and physically heavier the book, the less likely a student is to read it. The paperback version of Nabokov's *Lolita* or its equivalent is not necessarily the answer either, for the difficulty level of the language has to be taken into account. The second best in the form of simplified readers is obviously going to be preferred by most students. Hitherto, simplified readers seem to have been largely confined to a diet of boiled-down classics or children's literature, but in recent years (e.g., Oxford University Press's Alpha series and the latest titles in the Longmans Structural Readers or the Longman Imprint Books) more imaginative fare has been introduced: contemporary romances, science fiction, thrillers, TV serials, etc., all illustrated, considerably simplified, and limited in length. Once the apparent difficulties involved with reading have been overcome, and the habit acquired, reading need no longer be associated only with work, but with pleasure as well.

In most cases, however, students' attention has to be directed to reading of this kind. This can most easily be done by the language teacher drawing up a list of books to be read and reported on.

A two-part list

The compilation of the list is important. In ESP situations, around half the titles listed could be of simply written books in related professional areas, not too long and preferably with plenty of illustrations. Such books may not always be easy to locate, and much clearly depends on the library resources. The other part of the list could consist of light reading, containing a mix of simplified contemporary novels and simple short fiction.

A BOOK-REPORT PROGRAM AT THE TERTIARY LEVEL

In surveys conducted over the last few years in the institution in which I teach, in a country where traditionally the reading habit hardly exists but where books are institutionally available, it was found that very little was being read, even including textbooks; full figures have yet to be compiled, but it was the minority of students that appeared to be reading as much as one book a month. Preferred reading, apart from the daily newspaper, appeared to be comics, and certainly these seemed to be the most visible reading material.

The program unfolds

Such a situation in an ESL country leaves something to be desired. As English was a means to an end, a great deal hinged on what was being required in the way of reading in other subjects. It was found that some professional fields did not require more than a minimal amount of reading. Some courses were listed without either textbooks or references, and there was doubt as to whether the textbooks, even if they arrived in time for the beginning of a course, were actually required to be read—and, if they were, whether they were given and marked. The book as a decorative item is by no means a new idea (long before the tastefully arranged books on the coffee tables of contemporary interior-decorating magazines, the eighteenth-century library of the average aristocrat was a social requirement relating to rank rather than a literary phenomenon), but it is not one that should be encouraged in developing countries where resources are limited and books consequently expensive.

In order to provide simple leisure reading, we tried to obtain duplicate copies of all simplified readers in English, and placed these in the popular-fiction section. Students took to reading these on their own and, finding them easy, got through them quickly. This gave them a sense of achievement and a feeling of satisfaction.

When the seriousness of the situation became apparent, we required book reports as part of certain language courses. We drew up a list of titles for individual subject-specific classes, specifying twenty titles of easy professional books and twenty novels, many simplified, more or less graded by difficulty. (We found that the students did not like collections of short stories, simplified or not, and liked plays even less.)

Necessary instructions

Students were free to select other books if they wished, providing they received agreement to do so in advance. They were told at the beginning of the year that they would have to write reports on eight books during the year—four on professional books and four on light reading. The order in which they read and wrote was of no importance, and it was suggested they might find the novels easier. In circumstances where students are very poor readers, it might be advisable to forget about any professional input and to concentrate on acquiring a reading habit first, and so list only simplified readers and novels, but this was not necessary with the students I was dealing with. It was, however, necessary to keep an exact record of the books reported on by each student. Otherwise, the wilier tried to redeploy a report (their own or someone else's) or, where a mix of professional matter and fiction was required, to limit themselves to the lighter reading.

A list of instructions, in the form of "do's" and "don'ts," was given to students at the beginning of the year (a copy is appended) together with the graded list of books and two models of reports, one for a professional text (varied according to the professional area of the students) and one for a novel. We found it necessary to emphasize that sections should not be copied from the books without clearly showing that these were quotations, and any quotation had to be brief. Before we pointed this out, we found that extensive unacknowledged sections of the book tended to resurface in the students' reports; the students clearly had not written the sentences, and usually could not have explained their content. We noted that certain professional areas—architecture and management studies especially—appeared to have a predilection for windy verbiage, and students needed to be cautioned that they should not write like this. With careful selection of titles, and a good range of titles to choose from, it was usually possible to avoid examples of the more inflated or philosophical prose.

Practical benefits

In the particular situation I faced, where few books were being read, I found that many students were initially resentful of being required to read books, even professional books. Some, significantly, saw it as a waste of time, interfering with their studies. However, when I insisted on the requirement, the same students later pointed out, both in conversation and in their reports, that they enjoyed many of the books read, particularly the lighter fiction, and they volunteered to report on additional books by authors whose work they had liked. This was certainly rewarding, as was the sight of students spending spare time reading books instead of duplicated lecture notes, the local daily newspaper, or comics.

The writing of book reports produced two incidental benefits. One was minor, and related to the format of presentation of a book and of a report. The language courses led up to formal technical-report writing, and book reports, in much simplified form, with an introduction, main body (following the narrative or arguments of another), and conclusion, were to anticipate the more formal reports. The requirements to present the author, title, publisher, etc., in correct form of entry also anticipated and strengthened formal report writing in its bibliography section.

The major secondary benefit related to the overall need to summarize, simplify, present in a form for retention, and comment on a longer and more complex original—and to do so in simple and correct prose. Arguments in favor of summaries are not within the scope of this article, but there is undeniably a value in their compilation, particularly at tertiary levels. The discipline of writing simply and correctly must, of course, be reinforced on every available occasion.

A useful requirement

In situations where students are not reading enough, either generally or in their area of specialization, particularly in countries where the reading habit is largely alien, the requirement that students write brief book reports can do much to rectify the situation and, according to at least some of the students themselves, gets them interested in reading for its own sake. Teachers from Western backgrounds, where books are common in the home environment, have to put themselves in the position of students who do not have such advantages. We cannot expect the reading habit to be acquired by itself; some gentle compulsion, using selected books within the linguistic reach and interests of the students, can go a good way to improving the position.

APPENDIX

Instructions Given to Students: Book Reports

During this year you will be required to write eight reports on books you have read. A list is attached of suggested books to read; half are professional books and the other half light reading. If you cannot locate any particular title or would like to write about a different book, speak to your lecturer and show him the book you wish to read. Also attached are two samples of book reports; one is of a professional book and the other of a novel.

The Report

1. A book report should not normally be longer than two pages.
2. Always give the full title of the book in your book report, and show the author, title (underlined), place of publication, publisher, year of publication, and number of pages.
3. Always indicate if there are illustrations, tables, diagrams, a bibliography, and an index, and in your report say if the pictorial work is helpful.
4. Start your report with some general comments about the whole book, possibly about the author as well.
5. Finish your report with some general comments giving your opinion about the book.
6. In between the start and finish of the report, follow closely the development of the ideas in the book: that is, give a sentence or so on each chapter, saying what it is mainly about. If it is a novel, follow the development of the story, and if the chapters are very short, group several together in a few sentences.
7. Write about the book, about points made in it or events in it, in the present tense. However, with a novel, for events which have previously taken place you will obviously have to use the past tense.
8. Always use your own words, except when you are quoting from the book. Quotations should be rare, and always indicated with inverted commas and written more in the center of the page so that they stand out. Never copy from parts of the book without acknowledging it. You will get no credit for such copying, for anyone can do that. You will have marks deducted for writing down statements which you cannot explain because you do not understand them.
9. You will get credit for short, clear, correct sentences. You will lose marks for long, unclear, and incorrect sentences. You will also lose marks for each spelling mistake.
10. In some professional areas, writers tend to be long-winded in their language. You must not write like this. Your writing must always be brief and precise. Do not write wordy nonsense.

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Steinbeck's "Flight": Language through Literature, Again

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[*The short story by John Steinbeck discussed below, "Flight," was published shortly after the appearance of his first successful novel,* Tortilla Flat *(1935). Clearly it reflects the landscape of his birth on the Monterey peninsula of California, which, in the early twentieth century, was still virtually pioneer country, as well as the author's knowledge of the ethnic Mexican laborers and farmers he met there in his youth. The general reader who is curious about Steinbeck might also read* The Grapes of Wrath *(1939),* Cannery Row *(1945), and* East of Eden *(1952), as well as his shorter novels,* Of Mice and Men *and* The Red Pony.]

Ten years of teaching English language and English and American literature at the Federal University of Paraná has shown me that an approach to literature through a close reading of the text has always given useful results.

The average student of English and American literature in our university after a two-year course in English language (which corresponds approximately to the level of a student preparing for the Cambridge First Certificate) is then exposed for two years to literature. As he will probably be teaching English language in high school and using his language skills much more than his knowledge of literature, why not transform literature into an exciting language game? In this way, teachers of literature are working in both directions at the same time, showing once more that language and literature are actually a whole, which is only artificially separated for didactic purposes. And what is a close reading, if not a keener perception of how language is structured into literature?

Starting from this point of view, let us examine, among so many texts that could be used as an example of this kind of approach, a few excerpts from Steinbeck's short story "Flight," written in the late thirties. As the title suggests, this is the story of Pepé, a gangling boy who inadvertently kills a man and has to leave his family to flee into the mountains—as his moral code demands—in order to survive. But his chances of survival diminish with the changing nature of the country that he crosses—from benign and fertile to barren and hostile—up to the end when his death has become inevitable. And, although he has gradually become animal-like, as he is divested of his civilized accoutrements, he dies like a man, which he had so shortly before turned into.

As soon as the student starts reading the text, he is confronted with a descriptive passage:

> About fifteen miles below Monterey, on the wild coast, the Torres family had their farm, a few sloping acres above a cliff that dropped to the brown reefs and to the hissing white waters of the ocean. Behind the farm the stone mountains stood up against the sky. The farm buildings huddled like little clinging aphids on the mountain skirts, crouched low to the ground as though the wind might blow them into the sea. The little shack, the rattling, rotting barn were gray-bitten with sea salt, beaten by the damp wind until they had

> taken on the color of the granite hills. Two horses, a red cow and a red calf, half a dozen pigs and a flock of lean, multi-colored chickens stocked the place. A little corn was raised on the sterile slope, and it grew short and thick under the wind, and all the cobs formed on the landward sides of the stalks.

What does the student, on a first reading, become aware of? Probably that the location of the story is a farm near Monterey, surrounded by the ocean and by the mountains, and that besides an old barn, there are some farm animals around, and also some corn planted. So much for the inexperienced reader. It is the teacher's job now—whether he is teaching language or literature—to show the student that this first paragraph tells us much more than that: it sets the atmosphere of the story, of hostile and sterile nature, which is carried throughout the story up to the very end. We just have to take a good look at the *words* used, in order to become sensitive to the power behind them.

The farm, already set "on the *wild* coast," is even more handicapped by the fact that it consists of "a few *sloping* acres." There is danger: these acres are "above a *cliff* that drops to the brown *reefs* and to the *hissing* white waters of the ocean" (with the suggestion of the waters being alive, in their movement and sound). The farm is thus trapped between the cliff and the sea, on one side, and the "stone mountains" which "[stand] up against the sky" like iron sentinels in their immobility, size, and strength, on the other. The contrast between an all-powerful natural background and the efforts of man to tame it is heightened in the next sentence, through a simile comparing the "huddled" farm buildings to "little *clinging aphids* on the mountain skirts, *crouched low* to the ground as though the wind might blow them into the sea." The fragility and smallness of the farm buildings is thus made perceptible to the student by the writer's stressing their similarity to tiny insects that live on plants and suck their juices—and, by extension, we will begin to think of the inhabitants of the farm, the Torres family, as having the same characteristics. Alliteration is used here to reinforce this impression of fragility, in "clinging" and "crouched." If it were not for this act of clinging and crouching, "the wind might blow them into the sea" like insects. The same idea continues in the next sentence, in which alliterative effects are again used to emphasize the insignificance of the farm: "the little shack, the *r*attling, *r*otting barn."

Along with all this, a first touch of anthropophagy[1] is added. This is a theme that will be gradually developed throughout the story, always in relation to nature becoming anthropomorphic and devouring man. Both shack and barn "were gray-*bitten* with sea salt." The recurrent consonantal effect of "*beaten* by the damp wind" further increases and expands this connotation of physical violence. This last sentence, with the force of its verbs and its wealth of sound effects (why shouldn't the student of language be made aware of them?), could even be turned into a line of poetry:

> The little shack,
> the rattling, rotting barn
> were gray-bitten with sea salt,
> beaten by the damp wind
> until
> they had taken on
> the color of the granite hills.

The next line brings some variety to the bleak atmosphere and lack of color of the line before. If the little shack and the rotting barn have taken on the gray color of the granite hills—in a mimetic effort to survive maybe, like insects do, inside this aggressive and immense background—the farm animals do not seem so prone to the destructive powers of the sea wind (as "salty" and "damp" suggest, in the line before). Their description adds a touch of color to this otherwise grayish landscape: "two horses, a red cow and a red calf, half a dozen pigs and a flock of lean, multi-colored chickens stocked the place." The fact that the chickens are "lean," however, suggests lack of food. This is confirmed by the last sentence of this passage, for "a little corn was raised on the sterile slope, and it grew short and thick under the wind, and all the cobs formed on the landward sides of the stalks." The adjectives *little, short,* and *thick*, in relation to corn, again suggest a hostile landscape, confirmed by "sterile slope," and by the fact that the sea wind has prevented the growing of cobs on the seaward side of the stalks.

In this way, making the student *look* at the printed words and visualize them can bring some astonishing results: he is made aware that, even without having met the Torres family yet, he can feel the pressure of an antagonistic, omnipotent, and isolating nature over the futile attempts of the farm buildings to remain where they are and of the animals and corn to survive, through the clear detail provided by the adjectives and through the emotional effect of the verbs. As we have already seen, all the adjectives that relate to the farm convey smallness or decay or fragility ("*few* acres," "*little* shack," "*rattling, rotting* barn," "*little* corn," "*lean* chickens," "*sterile* slope," etc.), and the verbs add a further dimension of helplessness in relation to the farm buildings ("gray-*bitten*," "*beaten*").

Concentrating once more on the expository passages, let us look at another paragraph.

As Pepé leaves his family and rides into the wilderness, nature—in contrast to the countryside he lives in—seems at first benevolent, motherly, fertile, and peaceful, as if inviting the stranger to enter the forest:

> It was a well-worn path, dark soft leaf-mold earth strewn with broken pieces of sandstone. The trail rounded the shoulder of the canyon and dropped steeply into the bed of the stream. In the shallows the water ran smoothly, glinting

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[1] EDITOR'S NOTE: anthropophagy = the act of feeding on human flesh; cannibalism.

> in the first morning sun. Small round stones on the bottom were as brown as rust with sun moss. In the sand along the edges of the stream the tall, rich, wild mint grew, while in the water itself the cress, old and tough, had gone to heavy seed.

As the student can observe, this apparently simple paragraph hides again a treasure of nuances (which will be seen more clearly when contrasted with later passages, as we shall see). The path is "well-worn," suggesting that it offers no difficulty to the rider for it is also much used by other travelers. This impression is further intensified by the fertility of the land, with its "dark soft leaf-mold earth," and by the gentleness of the stream, in which "the water [runs] smoothly, glinting in the first morning sun." The overall impression is one of peace, light, and abundance, for "along the edges of the stream the tall, rich, wild mint [grows], while in the water itself the cress, old and tough, [has] gone to heavy seed." This luxuriance in nature is again conveyed through the adjectives attached to the nouns *path*, *earth*, and *mint*. There is no harsh word to darken this hopeful start into a new phase of the hero's life, so well metaphorized in the smoothness of the stream, unless we concentrate on the detail of the "broken pieces of sandstone," which could be interpreted as a kind of premonition of the landscape which Pepé will find further ahead. Also, there is a hint of a difficult and perilous path, for "the trail [rounds] the shoulder of the canyon and [drops] steeply into the bed of the stream."

One can also visualize the colorful picture provided by this scene, in which the natural colors of the landscape are heightened by the morning sun. And—this is for students of literature!—the so-called "dead metaphor" in "the shoulder of the canyon" acquires a new life when we relate it to the anthropomorphization of nature that is soon going to be developed, and of which an early sign was presented in "bitten" and "beaten" in our first paragraph.

This picture of an agreeable atmosphere in the early stages of Pepé's flight is gradually replaced by touches that become more and more ominous and adverse as the hours and the days pass by (beautifully suggested by the rising and setting of the sun and moon). We just have to examine a few more descriptive passages to receive an impression of the whole pattern made explicit through Steinbeck's masterful manipulation of words:

First day:

> The trail grew very steep. Now the redwood trees were smaller and their tops were dead, bitten dead, where the wind reached them. The horse plodded on; the sun went slowly overhead and started down toward the afternoon. . . .
>
> Pepé turned in his saddle and looked back. He was in the open now: he could be seen from a distance. As he ascended the trail the country grew more rough and terrible and dry. The way wound about the bases of great square rocks. . . .
>
> . . . The high mountain wind coasted sighing through the pass and whistled on the edges of the big blocks of broken granite. . . .
>
> The trail dropped quickly, staggering among broken rock. . . . A scar of green grass cut across the flat. And behind the flat another mountain rose, desolate with dead rocks and starving little black bushes. . . .
>
> . . . He held up his rifle on one side and his arm on the other to shield his face from the sharp brittle fingers of the brush. . . .

Second day:

> . . . Gradually the sharp snaggled edge of the ridge stood out above them, rotten granite tortured and eaten by the winds of time. Pepé had dropped his reins on the horn, leaving direction to the horse. The brush grabbed at his legs in the dark until one knee of his jeans was ripped.
>
> . . . The starved brush and rocks stood out in the half-light, strange and lonely in high perspective. . . . In the waste of the mountainside, the poor dry brush grew only three feet high. Here and there, big outcroppings of unrotted granite stood up like moldering houses. Pepé relaxed a little.
>
> . . . Little dry avalanches of gravel and shattered stones went whispering down the hill behind him.
>
> . . . On the other side the hill rose up sharply and at the top the jagged rotten teeth of the mountain showed against the sky. . . .

Third day:

> . . . At last he was nearing the top. The moon showed the uneven sharp back of it against the sky. . . .

Fourth day:

> . . . Below him lay a deep canyon exactly like the last, waterless and desolate. There was no flat, no oak trees, not even heavy brush in the bottom of it. And on the other side a sharp ridge stood up, thinly brushed with starving sage, littered with broken granite. Strewn over the hill there were giant outcroppings, and on the top the granite teeth stood out against the sky.
>
> . . . His body struck and rolled over and over, starting a little avalanche. And when at last he stopped against a bush, the avalanche slid slowly down and covered up his head.

As the student becomes more and more familiar with the text, he will be able to detect relationships, parallels, and contrasts among these different passages, which show the change that takes place in nature, preparing us for the outcome of the story.

Just to mention a few of these relationships, we can trace the change in nature through the adjectives attached to the nouns: the trail grows "very steep," the redwood trees are "smaller" and their tops are "dead, bitten dead," which takes us back to the passages already examined. The country grows "more rough and terrible and dry," together with the increase of "great square rocks," suggesting not only sterility but also inaccessibility and leading, through starvation, to anthropophagism, later on. The adjectives *dead, desolate,* and *starving* repeat themselves at shorter intervals, and vegetation is reduced to "a scar of green grass" (again with future implications in the word *scar*, which strikes an ominous note). Nature becomes explicitly anthropomorphic, starting with "starving little black bushes"

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Literature and Readability: Bridging the Gap in Foreign-Language Reading

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The transition from ***learning to read*** to ***reading to learn*** is one of the major problems in foreign-language pedagogy. Yet, many educators agree that reading is probably the longest retained skill; moreover, unlike speaking, reading can be developed to a relatively sophisticated level rather early.

What is meant by "reading" a foreign language? For this discussion I would like to offer Beatie's definition, which calls reading "the ability to deduce the core meaning of each word."[1] This definition emphasizes "extensive reading" or reading for global comprehension, rather than "intensive reading," where the student is expected to know or translate each word and grammatical structure.

Generally speaking, the introduction of literary texts presupposes a certain mastery of both the language and the reading skill *per se*. Psychologists and psycholinguists have not yet been able to tell us much that is definitive about the nature of reading, the reading process, or how reading is learned—either in the native or in a foreign language. Whatever the differences might be in the mental processes of learning to read one's native versus a second language, psycholinguists assume that once sound-symbol correspondences are established and students are familiar with a body of vocabulary and major patterns of syntax and morphology, second-language reading is identical to reading in the native language.

A study by Clarke, however, questions whether there is automatic transfer of effective reading strategies in the mother tongue to reading in a foreign language. Clarke administered an ESL reading test to two groups of adult Spanish-speaking ESL learners who had been grouped into good and poor readers in their native language. He found much less variation in mean scores on the ESL test than in mean scores on the Spanish reading test. He concludes that while some transfer occurs between first- and second-language reading skills, "limited language proficiency appears to exert a powerful effect" which " 'short circuits' the good mother-tongue reader's system, causing him/her to revert to poor reader strategies when confronted with a difficult or confusing task in a second language."[2]

While Goodman allows that "special reading strategies may result from particular characteristics of a grammatical system,"[3] he describes all reading essentially as a continuous cyclical process of four stages.

Condensed from Renate A. Schulz, "Literature and Readability: Bridging the Gap in Foreign Language Reading," *Modern Language Journal*, Volume 65, Spring 1981 (© 1981 by the Board of Regents of the University of Wisconsin System), pp. 43–53. By permission.

[1] Bruce A. Beatie, " 'Reading German': A Self-Tutorial Skills-Learning Package," *Modern Language Journal, 61* (1977), p. 411.

[2] Mark A. Clarke, "The Short Circuit Hypothesis of ESL Reading," *Modern Language Journal, 64* (1980), pp. 203–9.

[3] Kenneth S. Goodman, "Psycholinguistic Universals in the Reading Process," *Psycholinguistics and Reading*, ed. Frank Smith (New York: Holt, Rinehart, 1973), p. 25.

Rather than engaging in a word-by-word analysis and decoding, Goodman (p. 23) asserts, the efficient language user achieves comprehension by sampling from the text, predicting, testing predictions against semantic context and situational constraints, and confirming or disconfirming meaning before starting the cycle anew with a new sample. If the foreign-language reader is presented with an insufficient number of familiar concepts and contexts to permit sensible anticipation and testing of linguistic and semantic elements, he reverts to a word-by-word decoding process which contributes neither to the development of global reading comprehension, enjoyment of the text, nor to the encouragement of continued reading in the foreign language.

My thesis is that through careful selection of literary texts according to their linguistic difficulty we can avoid "frustrational" reading in a foreign language and increase the comprehension, appreciation, and enjoyment of literature.

Some educators argue against the use of specially constructed texts for teaching foreign-language reading and propose nongraded selections (literary or nonliterary) from the beginning of instruction. Oller, for instance, decries the fact that "foreign students are frequently expected to learn to read college-level prose by practicing material appropriate in complexity for fourth or fifth graders and in context suitable only for idiots."[4] In my opinion, however, we cannot advocate that foreign-language learners should be exposed to so-called "authentic" texts in unedited form, indiscriminately chosen without regard to linguistic difficulty, before they can approximate the level of linguistic and emotional maturity of the group of native speakers for whom the original prose was written. Even in the native language, reading comprehension will vary depending on the reader's level of education (as reflected in vocabulary knowledge), familiarity with the topic written about, and use of effective reading strategies.

One need not argue that all reading materials for foreign-language learners must be specially written, edited, or profusely glossed; but I insist that all texts need to be examined critically for their comprehension difficulty for the learners for whom they are intended.

Recognizing the dilemma presented by the use of authentic literary selections in undergraduate language instruction while students still grapple with the acquisition of basic language skills, it would stand to reason that we attempt to select texts which permit comprehension by individuals with limited language proficiency. Two basic questions must be asked before such text selection: (1) what are the factors that influence readability of a text? (2) how can one attempt to measure the relative comprehension difficulty of a text for a particular group of students?

Many factors interact to determine the comprehensibility of a text. Numerous studies, most dealing with the readability of English texts for native English speakers, have attempted to isolate these factors. In 1935 Gray and Leary conducted an extensive study, computing correlations between forty-four potential elements of linguistic difficulty and comprehension. They also investigated factors of visual appeal, format, organization, stylistic elements, and subject matter and their influence on readability.[5] Klare, reviewing research on readability, listed 482 references in a 1963 publication. In 1975 he added 131 references and twenty-six different formulas or devices for measuring readability in English and selected foreign languages.[6]

APPROACHES TO MEASURING READABILITY

Basically, the readability of a text can be measured in three ways: (1) instructor judgment; (2) comprehension testing by cloze procedure; and (3) statistical readability formulas based on some type of tally of linguistic elements. The remainder of this paper will discuss each of these.

Instructor judgment

According to Hall, instructor judgment, while relatively dependable when judging very easy or very difficult selections, shows less agreement when judging passages of medium difficulty.[7] Also, from an informal survey, I have some indication that many instructors who are thoroughly familiar with a literary work tend to underestimate the linguistic difficulty the text in question might present to students. Langer and others have attempted to "objectify" evaluator judgment through a system which requires an impressionistic assessment of specific text qualities, using a five-point semantic differential scale. Four main textual "dimensions" are presented for evaluation, with each containing several subcategories. The principal text qualities to be judged are *Einfachheit* (text simplicity in terms of short, simple sentences, and use of common words), *Gliederung-Ordnung* (visible external organizational structure and logical internal sequence of text), *Kürze-Prägnanz* (length of text and concentration, and conciseness of essential information), and *Zusätzliche Stimulanz* (presence of special "interest stimulators" within the text such as exclamations, direct speech, rhetorical questions, direct address of reader, etc.).[8] The authors claim that their system gives a more complete indication of readability than do readability formulas. While they admit that the device depends basically on the subjective judgment of the evaluator, they maintain that, with some training of evaluators, interrater reliability is very high.

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[4] John W. Oller, Jr., "Assessing Competence in ESL Reading," *TESOL Quarterly*, 6 (1972), p. 313.

[5] W.S. Gray and B.E. Leary, *What Makes a Book Readable?* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935).

[6] George R. Klare, *The Measurement of Readability* (Ames, Iowa: Iowa State University Press, 1963), and "Assessing Readability," *Reading Research Quarterly*, *10*, 1 (1974–75), pp.63–102.

[7] Alvin Lee Hall, *A Readability Study in Intermediate College German*, Dissertation, University of Georgia, 1971.

[8] Inghard Langer, Friedmann Schulz von Thun and Reinhard Tausch, *Verständlichkeit in Schule, Verwaltung, Politik und Wissenschaft* (Munich: Reinhardt, 1974).

Cloze-procedure testing

The cloze procedure, while now widely used as a test of reading comprehension and general language proficiency, originated as a test of readability.[9] "Cloze" is derived from "closure," a term used in Gestalt psychology and referring to the human tendency to complete mentally familiar yet incomplete patterns (e.g., seeing a broken circle as a whole one). To measure readability by cloze procedure, every randomly selected or nth word of a reading passage is deleted and replaced by a blank of some standard length. Students are asked to fill in the blank spaces with appropriate words derived from their reading of the remaining context of the passage. If such a test is administered to a randomly selected sample, representative of the population in question, the percentage of correctly completed spaces can constitute the readability score for the population under consideration.

Bormuth found that for the "liberated reading level," involving material which students can read independently, a minimum score of 50 percent on an exact-word cloze test is essential. For the "instructional reading level," involving texts that students can comprehend with some help of either the teacher or a dictionary in supervised insruction, a score of between 38 and 50 percent is necessary. A score of below 38 percent on an exact-word cloze test leads to "frustrational reading," defined as a text of such difficulty that the reader does not comprehend enough to justify its use.[10]

Anderson gives somewhat more conservative scores for interpreting difficulty levels based on cloze scores. According to his studies, a score above 53 percent on a cloze test indicates material for independent or "liberated" reading; a score between 44 and 53 percent puts the text in the "instructional" category; and a score below 44 percent indicates that the material is too difficult for the readers under consideration.[11]

Proponents of the cloze measure argue that it is a superior test of readability because it approaches comprehension of meaning and pattern relationships directly through the reader, rather than indirectly through the counting of linguistic elements as in the case with statistical readability devices. They further point out that other measures of readability do not take into account a population's familiarity with the topic being written about. Since prior experience and familiarity with the context is important for comprehension, this factor is a valid consideration.

A shortcoming of the cloze procedure is that it cannot *predict* readability, since at least a sampling of the population in question has to read the text before its difficulty level can be established. Since text selection is usually accomplished prior to the start of an academic term, the administration of cloze tests to prospective students in order to determine appropriateness of instructional materials is impractical. However, as McGuigan points out (p. 200), such tests could be used effectively in the placement of students into various reading courses.[12]

One additional factor might make the cloze procedure inappropriate for determining readability—especially if we deal with students whose major (or sole) purpose for language study is attaining reading comprehension, rather than overall language proficiency. A cloze test is not strictly a test of reading comprehension. It measures not just recognition and contextual inference; it tests active recall and language production—which are not absolutely necessary for meaningful reading. A student might, for instance, be able to guess the meaning of a missing word from context, but not be able to supply the foreign-language equivalent.

STATISTICAL READABILITY DEVICES

Research indicates that two major factors affect the linguistic difficulty of a written text. One is *syntactic complexity* (measured in terms of average sentence length in words, letters, or syllables; number of clauses per words, etc.); the second is *word difficulty* (measured in terms of average word length in syllables or letters, percentage of one-syllable words, number of "hard words"—i.e., words of three or more syllables—number of affixes, or percentage of words not appearing in word frequency counts).

Three of the most widely known statistical devices for measuring readability of English texts are the Flesch[13] and Dale-Chall[14] formulas and the Fry Readability Graph.[15] These devices purport to measure the relative difficulty of a written text for a particular group of readers.

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[9] Wilson L. Taylor, " 'Cloze Procedure': A New Tool For Measuring Readability," *Journalism Quarterly, 30* (1953), pp. 415–33.

[10] John R. Bormuth, "Comparable Cloze and Multiple-Choice Comprehension Test Scores," *Journal of Reading, 10* (1967), pp. 291–99.

[11] J. Anderson, "Selecting a Suitable 'Reader': Procedures for Teachers to Assess Language Difficulty," *RELC Journal*, 2, 2 (1971), pp. 35–42.

[12] Hugh E. McGuigan, "Difficulty Levels of Modern German Literary Prose vis-à-vis the Reader: An Empirical Investigation Using the Cloze Procedure with American Undergraduate and Graduate Students of German and Native German University Students," Dissertation, University of Minnesota, 1979.

[13] Rudolf Flesch, "A New Readability Yardstick," *Journal of Applied Psychology, 32* (1948), pp. 221–33. See also "Measuring the Level of Abstraction," *Journal of Applied Psychology, 34* (1950), pp.384–90.

[14] Edgar Dale and Jeanne S. Chall, "A Formula for Predicting Readability," *Educational Research Bulletin, 27* (1948), pp. 11–20 & 28.

[15] Edward Fry, "Fry's Readability Graph: Clarifications, Validity and Extension to Level 17," *Journal of Reading, 20* (1977), pp. 242–52.

Flesch counts average sentence length in words and average word length in syllables (number of syllables per 100 words) to arrive at a "reading ease" score. He also has developed (p. 229) a measure of "human interest" by counting the average percentage of "personal words" (defined as all nouns with natural gender, all pronouns except neuter pronouns, and the words "people" and "folks") and average percentage of "personal sentences" (defined as the percentage of "spoken sentences, marked by quotation marks or otherwise; questions, commands, requests, and other sentences directly addressed to the reader; exclamations; and grammatically incomplete sentences whose meaning has to be inferred from the context"). The formula for predicting "reading ease" is: $\mathrm{RE} = 206.835 - .846wl - 1.015sl$ (RE = reading ease; wl = word length; and sl = sentence length). The formula for predicting "human interest" is: $\mathrm{HI} = 3.635pw + .314ps$ (HI = human interest; pw = personal words; ps = personal sentences).

Scores computed from both formulas have a range from 0–100, indicating materials from very difficult to very easy, with intermediate ratings of difficult, fairly difficult, standard, fairly easy, and easy for the "reading ease" score. A score of 100 indicates reading material which is understandable for individuals who have completed fourth grade (a reading proficiency defined by the U.S. Census Bureau as "functionally literate"). Flesch maintains that the "reading ease" formula is not just a measure of sentence complexity, but also an indirect measure of abstraction, since word complexity and sentence length are an indirect measure of that factor.

The Dale-Chall formula also utilizes the number of words per sentence, but instead of average word length it measures the number of words not appearing on listings of high-frequency vocabulary. Fry's Readability Graph, which permits the classification of reading material into difficulty levels for instructional grade levels one through seventeen, is based on the average number of syllables and the average number of sentences in a 100-word passage.

Use of these devices is relatively quick and easy. Flesch, for instance, estimates (p. 390) that calculating the readability score of a 100-word text takes about six minutes. This time can be reduced even further if one uses the tables calculated by Farr/Jenkins which allow even untrained individuals to use the device.[16]

A criticism of statistical readability formulas, as Taylor (p. 417) already pointed out in 1953, is that they are not sensitive to effects of nonidiomatic uses, nonsense combinations of words, or awkward or confusing sentence structure. Also, since criteria deal strictly with linguistic factors internal to the text, readability formulas do not take into account the interaction between text and reader (i.e., prior experience with the topic being discussed, reader interest in topic, etc.).

PREDICTING READABILITY OF FOREIGN-LANGUAGE TEXTS

Research on measuring the linguistic difficulty of foreign-language texts has been limited. In particular, empirical inquiry into the difficulty levels of literary prose is scarce. McGuigan (pp. 7–9) attributes this paucity to the prevailing attitude among literary scholars that "it would somehow be sacrilegious to apply something as 'cold' and objective as statistics to something as subjective and 'alive' as literature." Laroche maintains that cloze procedure, syllable counts, or use of word-frequency lists are not necessarily valid in predicting comprehension difficulty encountered by second-language learners. He justifies his argument by pointing out that long (i.e., less frequent) English words are easier than short ones to a French speaker, since most of the long words are Romance cognates which also appear in English. In addition to sentence length (or some other measure of syntactic complexity), he proposes a cognate count based on a frequency count of such cognates within the native language. Unfortunately, no supportive data are given to verify his hypothesis.[17]

Generally speaking, the limited research available supports the use of similar linguistic criteria for measuring readability in all western languages. The sentence-length variable probably can be generalized as a difficulty factor in any language, since the short-term memory span necessary for processing and decoding meaning is limited for all humans.

Scherer estimated that for "liberated reading" in a foreign language a learner would need a minimum recognition vocabulary of 5,000 of the most frequently used words.[18] He emphasized the importance of new-word density to measure readability of foreign-language materials and recommended that the average number of "new words" (i.e., words unfamiliar to a student at a given stage of learning) not exceed one word in 35 words of running text. Research conducted by Holley, however, suggests that even an incidence of one "new" word in every fifteen does not hinder comprehension, at least in materials of low syntactical complexity.[19]

Chapman experimented with seven factors affecting readability of intermediate German texts for native English-speaking students: format/text length, new-word density, sentence length, style of expression, plot organization, interest, and idea density.[20] She concludes that at least five of these criteria must be met to assure appropriateness of a text for intermediate students: (1) a text should not be longer than four pages; (2) it should contain relatively few words which are unknown to students; (3) the average sentence length should be below thirteen words; (4) the style should be conversational; (5) the plot should be logically sequenced and deal with concrete events; (6) the topic should be appropriate to the cultural background of the students; and (7) a single paragraph should contain relatively few ideas.

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[16] James N. Farr and James J. Jenkins, "Tables for Use with the Flesch Readability Formulas," *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 33 (1949), pp. 275–78.

[17] Jacques M. Laroche, "Readability Measurement for Foreign Language Materials," *System*, 7 (1979), pp. 131–35.

[18] George A.C. Scherer et al., "Reading for Meaning," *Language Learning: The Intermediate Phase*, ed. William F. Bottiglia (Middlebury, Vt.: Northeast Conference, 1963), pp. 22–60.

[19] Freda M. Holley, "A Study of Vocabulary Learning in Context: The Effect of New-Word Density in German Reading Materials," *Foreign Language Annals*, 6 (1973), pp. 339–47.

Spaulding, using similar criteria as Dale-Chall, developed a procedure for measuring the relative difficulty of Spanish materials for native English speakers. His formula measures: (1) sentence complexity (average sentence length in words); and (2) new-word density (proportion of words not appearing on a Spanish word-frequency list). The numerical values of these two factors, as they are calculated from randomly selected passages of 100 words, are entered into the formula: D = 1.609 (asl) + 331.8 (density) + 22.0 (D = difficulty; asl = average sentence length; density = decimal percentage of words not on frequency list). The results of these calculations is a score ranging from 0–200, which can be interpreted with his readability graph.[21]

McGuigan (p.154) has utilized the Spaulding device with German literary passages and found close agreement between this predictor of readability, the opinion of German literary scholars, and scores on a cloze test. Contrary to Klare (p. 96), who found word difficulty to be the best single predictor of readability, McGuigan concludes that average sentence length might be the best overall predictor of text difficulty in German literary texts.

One of the least complicated methods of readability assessment which warrants further investigation for testing the readability of texts intended for American students of German is the Lix (*Lesbarkeitsindex*) device.[22] The Lix study, conducted in Sweden in the late sixties, tested the following eighteen factors for their value in predicting the linguistic difficulty of eighty German texts: number of uncommon words, common words, different words, difficult words, multi-syllable words, abstract words, words with natural gender, word length, sentence length, number of long sentences, density of dependent clauses in relationship to number of words and sentences in text, number of suffixes and personal pronouns, word frequency of selected words, and frequency of use of the genitive case. Results of the study indicated that sentence length and percentage of long words proved to be the most reliable predictors of readability as well as the easiest to use. The Lix device simply measures the sum of average sentence length and percentage of "long words" with the following formula:

$$\text{Lix} = \frac{\text{number of words}}{\text{number of sentences}} + \frac{\text{number of long words x } 100\text{[23]}}{\text{number of words}}$$

Björnsson maintains that, with an adjustment of the above norms to fit the linguistic constraints of each particular language, Lix can be used for other languages as well. Similar to Klare, Björnsson found that word difficulty (i.e., percentage of words with more than six letters) is the single best predictor of text difficulty.

My own investigation comparing difficulty ratings by the Lix and Flesch formulas on selected German literary texts revealed that a sample size of three to six 100-word passages recommended by most formulas might be insufficient for assessing the linguistic difficulty of literary texts. Sentence length in such texts can vary considerably. Unless the sample size takes this variability into account, the difficulty index might not be representative of the total text. A minimum sample of 2,000 words or 200 sentences, as suggested by Björnsson (p. 39), will give a more reliable indicator of readability than will a more limited sample.

CONCLUSION

Linguistic complexity of a work of literature affects accessibility, comprehensibility, and enjoyability on the part of the reader, and educators should look carefully at this factor before selecting literary texts for undergraduate foreign-language instruction. Literary texts employed in foreign-language courses serve as pedagogical tools for teaching language and critical analysis of language and ideas. They become useless—and indeed destructive—if the learners cannot sufficiently penetrate the text to make general sense of it. If a text falls into the "frustrational" category for a particular group of readers, this does not necessarily mean that this text should be avoided. It does, however, mean that

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[20] Helen G.C. Chapman, "Criteria for the Selection of Short Prose Fiction to be Used in Level II (Intermediate) Foreign Language Classes," Dissertation, University of Texas, 1975.

[21] Seth Spaulding, "A Spanish Readability Formula," *Modern Language Journal, 40* (1956), pp. 433–41. See especially his readability graph (p. 435) for plotting average sentence length and density.

[22] C.H. Björnsson, *Lesbarkeit durch Lix* (Stockholm: Pedagogiskt Centrum, 1968). Another description of Lix can be found in Jan Renström, "Texte und Textbehandlung im Deutschunterricht," *Die Unterrichtspraxis, 13* (1980), pp. 150–55.

[23] A long word is defined as a word with more than six letters. The following norms aid in interpreting the Lix result:

	20	
very easy text	25	
	30	children and youth literature (for ages 8–16)
easy text	35	
	40	belletristic texts (prose fiction for adults)
average text	45	
	50	informational (non fiction) texts (*Sachliteratur*)
difficult text	55	
	60	technical texts (*Fachliteratur*)
very difficult text	65	
	70	

the instructor has to provide sufficient time and text-related exercises to help make it accessible to the students.[24]

Classroom teachers need a procedure which permits them to make reasonably accurate and objective predictions about the difficulty their students will encounter when reading specific literary texts. For this purpose, the use of a predictive statistical device can be helpful. These devices are objective, necessitate no preparation of materials or sampling of students, and are quick and easy to use. Furthermore, they correlate highly with other readability measures, such as the cloze test.

Ideally, of course, publishers, textbook writers, and editors should furnish comparable data on the linguistic difficulty of texts intended for instructional purposes—be they of a literary nature or not. We need a large-scale effort to validate readability criteria for literary texts in all commonly taught languages and to research the relative linguistic difficulty of literary works for American foreign-language instruction. With the help of computers this task should not be too difficult. Until these data become available, classroom teachers who need an objective assessment of the readability of a text will probably find that use of the Spaulding or Lix formulas will be easiest and provide the most dependable results.

Klare (p. 97) maintains that "simple word and sentence counts can provide satisfactory predictions of readability for most purposes." Common sense tells us that a statistical readability measure cannot be the sole criterion on which to select a literary text for instructional use. But if, in addition to assessing linguistic complexity, teachers also make a subjective judgment regarding the length and organization of the text, the content appeal, and special stylistic components used by the author which could invalidate the readability measure obtained by element counting, they should obtain a fairly accurate and useful indicator of comprehension difficulty for the texts and students under consideration. □

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[24] For practical suggestions of exercises to improve reading comprehension, the following publications might be especially helpful: G. Truett Cates and Janet K. Swaffar, "Reading a Second Language: Comprehension and Higher Order Learning Skills," *Recherches et échanges, 4* (1979), pp.44–83; Ronald Mackay, Bruce Barkman and R.R. Jordan, *Reading a Second Language: Hypotheses, Organization and Practice* (Rowley, Massachusetts: Newbury House, 1979); June K. Phillips, "Second Language Reading: Teaching Decoding Skills," *Foreign Language Annals, 8* (1975), pp. 227–32; George D. Spache and Paul C. Berg, *The Art of Efficient Reading* (New York: Macmillan, 1978). Although the last work cited is aimed at improving skills in the native language, it makes valuable suggestions which also apply to second language reading.

Steinbeck's "Flight" continued from page 8

through "the sharp brittle fingers of the brush" and "the brush grabbed at his legs" to then become explicitly anthropophagic, with "the jagged rotten teeth of the mountain" and "the granite teeth stood out against the sky." As has been foreshadowed in "little dry avalanches of gravel and shattered stone [which] went whispering down [again personification] the hill behind him," nature finally swallows him up in its starvation, after he has immolated himself to his mysterious pursuers by standing up in the open and being shot dead and then being buried in the avalanche which slides "slowly down" and covers up his head.

With this kind of linguistic approach, either by pursuing an isolated paragraph or by establishing relationships throughout paragraphs at different points in the narrative, we can help advanced students of language and those starting with literary texts to develop a higher sensitivity towards language. Such sensitivity cannot be acquired only through grammatical rules or through the use of a sophisticated technical terminology of literary terms, if students are not able to read, to visualize, and to think about the words printed on the page. If they are only interested in finding out what the plot of the story is, they will fail again, for, in these descriptive passages, there is nothing at first sight to arouse the interest in reading on if their eyes are not opened to the rich connotative overtones pervading almost every word in the story. The students should also be made aware that this approach is only one of the multiple ways of dealing with a text, although it is a fundamental one. Style, character, plot, theme, all of them can be approached through a close reading; and if we want to go further, we can still examine Steinbeck's sociological background for the story, among other alternatives.

As we can see, practically no reference has been made to Pepé's actions, for my purpose here has been to show how to awaken the students' sensibility in reading descriptive passages, which of course they can then extend to other narrative modes. I hope that, by having made a close reading in relation to the setting, the students will continue on their own to read carefully, sensitively, and critically through the other passages of the story, and, having reached the end, feel that literature *is* language, after all. □

Activities for Practicing Stress and Intonation

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The following teaching suggestions and classroom activities were prepared for an in-service training course for Italian state-school teachers of English. Although these activities were developed for a very specific learning environment (with consideration for the students' age, nationality, interests, needs, hours per week, availability of textbooks and tapes, etc.), I feel that most, if not all, of them could well be used by English teachers in other countries or in different learning situations.

ACTIVITIES FOR PRACTICING WORD STRESS

It is vital that elementary students be made aware of the existence of word stress as a feature of language, not only of the English language. At the beginning of a course, I would recommend that the teacher give a brief introduction to this topic (in their native language), followed by an activity in which the students identify the stress in their own names, and then write their names, underlining the stressed syllable; then the same activity can be done (identify, then write) with some everyday words of their native language (in this case, Italian).

Another activity is to sort everyday words into groups. For example, the words below are listed separately, those with stress on the first syllable and those with stress on the middle syllable.

fegato	marito
polipo	amore
libero	cancello
camera	

(From the above group, we see that stress in Italian does not depend on the vowel used; for example *e* is sometimes stressed, sometimes unstressed.) Afterwards the teacher can lead a brief discussion about what difficulties a foreigner learning Italian might have—how he might mis-stress these words because he wouldn't know where to put the stress; he might say libero instead of libero, for example.

In this way, the student is introduced in a practical way to one of the theoretical aspects of language.

Another useful activity is to imagine introducing yourself to a foreigner, saying your name carefully, and then writing it and showing where the stress is; this could be incorporated into the first proper English lesson.

A (a foreigner): What's your name?
B (the student himself): Marcello.
A: Marcello? (mispronouncing it, putting stress on *Mar*)
B: No, Marcello.

At this point in the lesson, the teacher could teach a few common English first names and students could re-

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This article is an adaptation of "On Stress and Intonation," which appeared in *Lingua e Nuova Didattica*, 9, 1, pp. 17–24. Used with permission.

peat, and identify the stress.[1] Point out that most English first names (Christian names) have stress on the first syllable, and that marking stress is a classroom activity, not a feature of written English.

OTHER WORD-STRESS ACTIVITIES

1. Choral repetition after the teacher or after a tape. This is of limited value but is good as a warm-up or tongue-loosening activity; it also builds confidence.

2. Identify the stress in a word from a spoken or written model; this can be a speaking or a writing activity.

3. Identify two words as having the same or different stress patterns. For example, the teacher says "window, stomach," student responds "the same"; the teacher says "photograph, religion," student responds "different." Students can also mark a grid with their responses, as below:

	THE SAME	DIFFERENT
1.	X	
2.		X
3.		
4.		
5.		

This is a variation of the classical minimal-pair distinction exercise for phoneme distinction: *ship/sheep, cup/cap*, etc.

4. Two teams make lists of words; each challenges the other team to identify the stress correctly.

5. Small groups form and choose a topic area (types of food, names of rivers, names of sports, capital cities, etc.), then list as many examples as they can think of, then group this list of words by stress.

6. Special workshop on number stress, especially

column 1 →	← column 2
13	30
14	40
15	50
16	60
17	70
18	80
19	90

The principal difference in pronunciation between column 1 and column 2 is that 13, 14, etc., have double stress (or, some say, primary stress followed by secondary stress), whereas 30, 40, etc., have stress on the first syllable and no stress on the second syllable. The final /n/ is in fact a less important distinction, and is often "swallowed up" (assimilated) by the following word, for example:

13 newspapers
30 newspapers

It is wise, therefore, to do a lot of classroom work that involves distinguishing these two categories of numbers, such as incorporating them in dialogues:

A: Did you say 13 cents?
B: No, I said 30 cents.

or

A: How much is this magazine?
B: 30 cents.
A: Sorry, 13 or 30?
B: 30 cents, sir.

Another useful activity is a rapid number dictation.

7. The teacher should have some way of signaling a pronunciation error caused by incorrect stress. If a student says *af*ternoon instead of after*noon*, the teacher need only say "Stress?" or "Where's the stress?" to indicate what the problem area is.

8. Try to incorporate "problem stress words" into all lessons. Repeated practice will help. Problem stress words for Italians include:

13 vs. 30, etc.
afternoon
hotel
Milan
police
grandmother
vegetable (3 syllables!)
television

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[1] My dictionary, Zanichelli-Longman, has a section with common English given names, followed by a phonetic transcription (which shows where the primary stress is). Some good examples might be:
one syllable
Ann
Joe
Phil
Two syllables: Stress on first
David
Tony
Peter
Two syllables: stress on second
Louise
Elaine
Marie

9. Use a reading passage to practice stress recognition (among other things). The following passage (an advertisement for candy) contains twelve two-syllable words; locate them and say if they are stressed like *Mos*cow or like Ber*lin:*

> Try new improved "CHOC"! — the candy that's produced in England! It was good before and now it's even better. It's filled with peanuts. Eat it, and you'll be amazed! Offer it to your friends and make your next party a success.

This reading passage could be the basis for a one-hour lesson that would include not only reading and stress recognition, but also other language-involved activities; for example, students could design a poster to advertise "CHOC" (using this text, or another text they write themselves), they could work in pairs writing dialogues for a television advertisement for "CHOC," a party situation could be simulated in which the host offers "CHOC" to his guests, etc.

10. Encourage your students to ask if they're unsure of how to pronounce a word, or where the stress is. Even beginners can say "Where's the stress in *hamburger?*" or "Is the stress on *po-* or on *-lice?*"

11. Practice using a dictionary in class; explain that it's not necessary to be able to read the phonetic alphabet in order to understand how the stress is marked.

PRACTICING SENTENCE STRESS AND INTONATION

We should keep the same principles in mind when teaching sentence stress and intonation as when teaching grammar and vocabulary, namely:

1. Move from easy to difficult, from the known to the unknown.
2. Integrate what has been done before with new material.
3. Present clearly.
4. Practice in a variety of ways (different techniques, different situations).
5. Move from controlled to free production.
6. Make sure all language occurs in meaningful contexts.

Remember that students must understand that some words *are* more important than others in a given utterance, and must therefore be stressed in connected speech; that sentence stress is not random, it has a reason for being.

SOME ACTIVITIES

1. Choral repetition after a teacher or after a tape, clapping or beating on the important syllables. (Again, of limited value.)

2. Identify the important word. Students must be able to single out the nucleus, although they need not know the terminology. They should be able to identify the important word, having listened to a piece of language. *And,* more difficult, they should be able to identify the important word, knowing the situation and seeing the written form; they should be able to say how it "should sound." Consider the following dialogue:

An argument:

A: It isn't YOUR money! It's MY money!

B: That's not true! It's MY money.

For the student to understand that the stress is on MY and YOUR, he must necessarily understand the nature of this communicative act: why these two people are speaking, what they want to emphasize, and how they feel. Obviously they are angry, and it is the question of who the money belongs to that is at stake. In other circumstances, the same item might appear with different stress (on MONEY, for example) because the reason for speaking would be different. For example:

A: We know that this is the secret envelope with the stolen diamond in it! Give it to us!

B: That's not true! It's my MONEY!

3. Correct someone else's mistake/misconception. This is good for practicing strong stress on one word. It is fun to do and children love it. Example:

Teacher (summing up a story): Now there were two little pigs . . .

Students: No, there were THREE little pigs!

Obviously, this shouldn't be overdone; if it is, it loses its effectiveness. For other ideas of this type see the Teacher's Book, *Kernel Lessons* (O'Neill et al., Longman, 1971) on "Correct My Statements" exercises.

A few other examples:

A man has lost his way, and is telephoning for directions:

A: I'm sorry. I can't find your house. Is it BEFORE or AFTER the supermarket?

B: It's AFTER the supermarket.

(A variation: Is Bridge Street BEFORE or AFTER the supermarket? It's not BRIDGE Street, it's BEECH Street, and it's AFTER.)

Telephone dialogue:

A: Hello. Is this William Jones?

B: No, this is PETER Jones. WILLIAM isn't here. Is there a message?

A: No. I'll phone back later. Thank you.

4. Make a tape in class. If a tape recorder is available, it's an excellent idea to record students performing a brief dialogue. Train students to be self-critical, especially regarding pronunciation. Students can record, lis-

ten, and re-record with better stress and intonation.

5. Every classroom occasion that involves a natural use of language should be exploited for practicing the rhythm of connected speech. In situations where teams, pairs, or individuals do things in turn, the following always crops up, for example:

A: It's MY turn!
B: No it isn't, it's OUR turn!
Teacher: Now, wait a minute. Whose turn IS it?
(Where's the stress? etc.)

6. The teacher might have a stock character (including a picture of him, of course) who always makes mistakes, and therefore needs to be corrected. His mistakes must be simple enough that everyone in the class can immediately see them. Let us call our stock character "George."

George (answering in class): Two and two are five.
Fellow student, whispering to him: NO! Two and two are FOUR!
George (doing his homework): London is the capital of Italy.
His mother (correcting and explaining): No, George, London's the capital of ENGLAND. ROME is the capital of Italy.

7. Build up dialogues, eliciting from the students (but *you* set the situation and define the characters):

A (visiting B's house): Where's your dog?
B: I haven't GOT a dog. I've got a CAT.
A: Oh, yes. That's right. I forgot.

or

Traffic policeman talking to motorist:
Pol: May I see your license?
Mot: I don't have my license.
Pol: You don't have your license?
Mot: No, I mean, I HAVE my license, but it's at HOME.

The policeman's echoed questions (You don't have your license?) link this stress exercise with intonation exercises, although of course it is artificial to classify them separately.

8. Echoed questions, for when a person is surprised, confused, sarcastic, critical, stalling for time. Set the scene carefully, defining the characters and their relationship to one another.

Bob: May I speak to John?
John's mother: I'm afraid not. He's still sleeping.
Bob: He's still sleeping???
John's mother: Yes, he never gets up before eleven.

9. Identify the speaker's attitude from his intonation (tired, angry, surprised, etc.) Tapes are especially useful here, especially ones of telephone conversations. Beginners can say "I think he's angry"; more advanced students can say "Peter sounds tired."

10. Use blackboard drawings (arrows) and hand movements to illustrate the voice's movement up or down.

11. Practice a simple phrase in two different ways, in two different situations. For example, *thank you* as a perfunctory remark, as a cashier might say it to each person in a long line; this is a low rise (because it is one in a series, really). *Thank you* showing real gratitude is a high fall—if for example, someone returned a lost wallet to you.

12. Practice one-word questions with a falling tone by making remarks that students must query using *why/how/what/where/when*. For example:

Please leave the room at once!	(Why?)
Cut this in half.	(How?)
I'm going to China.	(When?)
Can I ask you a favor?	(What?)
Let's go out for dinner.	(Where?)

13. Practice asking for and giving directions, with a map. This is also good for review of prepositions: *It's opposite the post office, next to the bank*, etc., and for practicing imperatives, with or without time clauses (*until you come to the bridge*, etc.). Directions are a series of imperatives, and, like any series, each item finishes with an upward glide, and the last item in the series has a falling tone. Example:

> Cross the square, walk about 50 yards, turn right, walk another 150 yards, and you'll see it on your left.

This same intonation pattern is used for all lists of things, so you can practice it in making and reading aloud shopping lists, listing the places you've been, saying what's in your handbag, telling someone what you've got in the refrigerator, etc.

14. A variation of #13 is spelling your name; the last letter has a falling tone. Here, however, a level tone is maintained for the preceding letters, which all get more or less equal stress. With a very long name, you might subdivide it into two groups, and each group would then finish with a falling tone. Have the students dictate their names to each other and then read them back (perhaps pretending to register at a hotel). Or pass out cue cards with new identities on them. Again you can practice the misconception-activity (#3):

A: Is that S - A - M - S - E - N?
B: No, *O*N, not *E*N.

with stress on the misunderstood letter.

15. Practice numbers by reciting telephone numbers, breaking up a number into two or three subgroups, depending on its length. Write your own number on the

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A Look at the Progressive in English

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In spite of the many articles and sections of books written about the progressive of English verbs, there seems to be no consensus as to its essential meaning. Some scholars say that it indicates "incompletion" or "incompleteness," others, "process," and still others, "(limited) duration" or "temporariness." And so on.

To try to clarify the meaning of the progressive is no easy task. In what we call "school grammars" or "pedagogic grammars," the progressive is often considered merely a syntactic form indicating an action in progress, as its name implies. But the matter is not that simple; it is, in fact, much more complicated and subtle than we generally suppose. It certainly presents one of the most difficult areas to be mastered by those of us who must learn English as a foreign language. My purpose in this article is to contribute to an understanding of the progressive in English in a way that will aid in the teaching of it.

The importance of context

In searching for the meaning of the progressive, we must remember that language normally occurs within a particular context or situation, and that the same form may have different interpretations in different contexts. Chafe (1970:175–78) gives the following examples of the progressive

(1) Bob *is singing*.
(2) Bob *is opening* the door.

and explains that there are two possible meanings of the progressive: "progressive" (which refers to the present) and "anticipative"(which refers to the future), each of them being able to refer to "nongeneric" (a single event) and "generic" (a series of events) happenings. Thus, there are four possible interpretations of each of the two sentences above, depending on the context.

As the following examples show, the progressive can also express "volition," "order," "prohibition," and "emotional coloring" such as displeasure, embarrassment, censure, etc.

(3) I'*m* not *coming* back any more. —A. Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (volition)
(4) You'*re staying* for dinner. That's an order. — E. Segal, *Love Story* (order)
(5) You'*re* not *going* near him! — A. Miller, *Death of a Salesman* (prohibition)
(6) You'*re* always *having* to think of so many things that are out of doors and *getting* spoiled. —J. Webster, *Daddy-Long-Legs* (emotional coloring)

This paper was read in manuscript by Norma R. Whitcomb, a native speaker of English, who teaches English at the Faculty of Education, Shimane University. I am very grateful to her not only for correcting some errors in English, but for giving me a lot of helpful comments.

In spite of this variety of meanings, we must not forget that the progressive and the context in which it occurs are inseparably connected, and that the differences in meaning of the progressive, in the main, come from differences in the contexts in which it appears. Thus the meanings mentioned above are not the essential meanings of the progressive, but rather nuances that arise from those contexts.

SEMANTIC FEATURES OF THE ENGLISH VERB

Another important consideration, in addition to context, is the semantic features of English verbs. It is generally agreed that verbs can be divided into two main types: *dynamic verbs* and *stative verbs*, and that, as a rule, the progressive is available only to dynamic verbs. However, stative verbs can sometimes take the progressive. Examples of the progressive with typical stative verbs such as *have, be, live* can easily be found:

(1) Well, Daddy, Master Jervie's here. And such a nice time as we'*re having!* —J. Webster, *Daddy-Long-Legs*

(2) It has been nearly two months since I wrote, which wasn't nice of me, I know, but I haven't loved you so much this summer—I'*m being* frank. —ibid.

(3) "What are you doing in Berkeley?" "Oh," Benjamin said. "Well, I'*m living* here. Temporarily." —C. Webb, *The Graduate*

What is the meaning of the progressive when used with stative verbs such as these? Do we notice any nuances or overtones that these verbs do not have when used in the simple present? To consider this question, we should first subdivide the English verb into semantic categories. The following classification given by Leech (1971:18–22) seems helpful:

A. MOMENTARY VERBS: *hiccough, hit, jump, kick, knock, nod, tap, wink*, etc.

B. TRANSITIONAL EVENT VERBS: *arrive, die, fall, land, leave, lose, stop*, etc.

C. ACTIVITY VERBS: *drink, eat, play, rain, read, work, write*, etc.

D. PROCESS VERBS: *change, grow, mature, slow down, widen, deteriorate*, etc.

E. VERBS OF INERT PERCEPTION: *feel, hear, see, smell, taste*

F. VERBS OF INERT COGNITION: *believe, forget, hope, imagine, know, suppose, understand*, etc.

G. STATE VERBS OF HAVING AND BEING: *be, belong to, contain, consist of, cost, depend on, deserve, have, matter, own, resemble*, etc.

H. VERBS OF BODILY SENSATION: *ache, feel, hurt, itch, tingle*, etc.

The remainder of this study will be based on the above classification. Roughly, types *A* through *D* are dynamic verbs, and *E* through *H* are stative verbs. We shall now consider these two types. Since stative verbs pose more subtle and difficult problems with regard to the progressive, we shall describe them in greater detail.

Dynamic verbs

Momentary Verbs. Quirk et al. (1972:96) give the following explanation:

> Momentary verbs . . . have little duration, and thus the progressive aspect powerfully suggests repetition.

$$\text{The child} \left\{ \begin{array}{c} \textit{jumped} \text{ (= once)} \\ \textit{was jumping} \text{ (= several times)} \end{array} \right\} \text{for joy.}$$

> Of course, the progressive aspect does not always imply repetition with these verbs, e.g.,
> The man *was jumping* off the bus when the policeman caught him.

If, as many scholars say, the basic meaning of the progressive is "(limited) duration," and, as Leech (1971:15) suggests, the progressive expands the time spans of momentary verbs, this expansion may usually be accomplished by repetition of the action represented by the verb, since the time span of the single action denoted by the verb is too short to express "(limited) duration."[1]

Another way that the progressive can create duration in these verbs is by doing so in a relative sense: by slowing down the speed of the action as if it were caught on slow-motion film. In doing this, we are, in a sense, capturing the action of a momentary verb as if it were a process verb. The last example in the above quotation illustrates this latter case. The verb *jump* in this instance is functioning as a process verb, since the progressive here expresses "immediate future," meaning "the action is just about to start," and the action may be considered to be its own process.

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[1] EDITOR'S NOTE: Leech makes the general statement that "the Progressive *stretches* the time span of an 'event verb,' but *compresses* the time span of a 'state verb' " (referring to psychological rather than real time). In his classification, momentary verbs are a subcategory of event verbs.

Transitional-Event Verbs. Leech (1971:19) states that the progressive of this type of verb indicates "an *approach* to the transition, rather than the transition itself"—that is, the actions are literally in a transitional state and are not completed. He further explains (p.16):

> Using the instantaneous present, one might exclaim *The bus stops!*, so indicating the vehicle's arrival at a state of rest. But *The bus is stopping* means only that the bus is slowing down towards a stop: cessation of movement is not guaranteed.[2]

In this case we may paraphrase *The bus is stopping* as "The bus is about to stop."[3]

It is clear from the above example that the progressive of transitional-event verbs can indicate the process of an action, but it differs from the progressive with process verbs (which will be discussed below) in that it tends to focus on the final stage of an action. Therefore, the overtone of "incompletion" derives from the "transitional" meaning of the verbs themselves rather than from the progressive.

Activity Verbs. Verbs of this class are frequently used in the progressive, to indicate an action in progress or in continuity, or to suggest limited duration, while the simple present with these verbs indicates "general truth," "habit," and so on. I cite here an example from Zaadvoort (1975:37):

(1) I seldom *read* French.
(2) What *are* you *reading?*—Oh, some trash I picked up at a bookstall.

Process Verbs. Concerning this class of verbs, Leech (1971:19) states:

> As a process ordinarily has duration, but not indefinite duration, these verbs also tend to go with the Progressive Aspect: *The weather* IS CHANGING *for the better; They*'RE WIDENING *the road; etc.*

Since the progressive with process verbs expresses the fact that the action itself is about to begin, has just begun, or is literally in its own process, the difference between the progressive with transitional-event verbs and with process verbs is that the former, as noted above, focuses on the final phase of an action, while the latter focuses on the initial or medial stage of an action. Therefore it is a natural result of the "process" meaning that the progressive of process verbs carries an overtone of "incompletion."

Transitional-event verbs and process verbs can be roughly categorized as what Hornby (1975:107) calls "inchoative verbs." An inchoative verb is "a verb that denotes the beginning, development, or final stage of a change of condition." He gives *get, become, grow, come, go, turn, fall, run, wear*, etc., as typical examples of inchoative verbs.

As the following examples in Hornby (1975:108) show, the progressive of process verbs often accompanies a comparative adjective, indicating the process in which a gradual change is taking place:

(3) We're all getting/growing *older*.
(4) Our work is becoming *more interesting*.

It is intriguing that a similar phenomenon can be seen in the transformation of stative verbs into process verbs when they are used in the progressive with comparative forms (as discussed below).

Stative verbs

Verbs of Inert Perception. This category consists of what are sometimes called "verbs of sensation." They are nonvolitional verbs, whose subjects have no positive "will" or "volition." As Leech (1971:23) suggests, however, three members of this category, the verbs *feel, taste*, and *smell*, can indicate "active perception," as in the second sentence below:

(1) I (can) *feel* the ground. (INERT)
(2) I'*m feeling* the ground with my foot. (ACTIVE)

Also, *see* and *hear* have, respectively, the "active" counterparts *look at* and *listen to*. That is to say, the difference between the "inert" and the "active" use lies in whether "agency" is present or not: *look at* and *listen to* might be considered as "involving animate agency."

According to Quirk et al. (1972:353), *look at* and *listen to* require an "agentive" subject and *see* and *hear* require a "recipient" subject, while the other verbs of perception—*taste, smell*, and *feel*—can be either "agentive" or "recipient." Transferring the meaning of the subject from "recipient" to "agentive" seems to be the function of the progressive. We should note, however, that when a verb is used actively (that is, with an agentive subject), it is no longer construed as a verb of perception, but as an activity verb.

It would be wrong to say that *hear* and *see* are NEVER used in the progressive. Leech (1971:24), for example, gives the following:

(3) I *am hearing* you clearly. (spoken, say, by a radio or telephone operator)

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[2] Whitcomb, however, has commented on this example as follows: "We never say, 'The bus stops!' except maybe in a live broadcast on TV when the commentator uses the present tense to impart vividness."

[3] The progressive of *stop* is, as a rule, interpreted in this way, but it seems capable of indicating cessation when the subject of the sentence is a personal pronoun, such as *you* or *we*. Consider the following, for example: "What is the matter?" she asked rather breathlessly in French. "Why are we stopping?" —A. Christie, *Murder on the Orient Express*. (This is said by a passenger on board a train that has come to a halt, so the "transitional" interpretation is impossible here.)

and he explains:

> The meaning here is "I am receiving your message," and the effect of the Progressive is to place emphasis on the *process* of communication. We may argue, therefore, that in this context *hear* is interpreted as a "process verb."

Hatcher (1951:269) states that the progressive is used "to make for an emphasis on development by degrees." She gives the following examples:

(4) I'*m hearing* it better now: it's coming through more clearly all the time.

(5) I'*m seeing* it more clearly now: focus it just a little more to the left.

This explanation seems to be equivalent to saying that these verbs are transformed into process verbs and are no longer perception verbs. The comparative words and phrases used with these verbs seem to aid their semantic change from "stative" to "process." Thus we may say that verbs of inert perception can sometimes be used in the progressive, and when they are, they are transformed into either activity verbs or process verbs.

Verbs of Inert Cognition. These verbs do not usually take the progressive; when they do, they acquire a certain overtone not present in their original "stative" meaning. Leech (1971:24) gives the following example, stating that it suggests "some positive mental activity":

(6) I'*m thinking* about what you said. (= considering; ruminating)

He suggests that the verb *think* in this instance is functioning as an "activity verb."

Another case in which verbs of inert cognition acquire another meaning may be seen in this example and comment from Hornby (1975:106):

(7) How *are* you *liking* your new job? (Here the progressive tense is used because the person to whom the question is put may not have arrived at a final state of either like or dislike.)

As Hornby's comment shows, the progressive in this case indicates a process, and the verb *like* is functioning as a "process verb."

It is clear from the preceding that when verbs of this class are used in the progressive they acquire the meaning of either "activity" or "process" in just the same way as do verbs of inert perception (described above). In fact, Close (1977:79) observes that the sentence

(8) What *are* you *wanting* now?

"suggests that you have not made up your mind *what* you want, or that you are in a perpetual state of wanting something you do not have." It is necessary to know the context in order to know which meaning is intended. Thus again it is the context that determines the meaning of the progressive.

Incidentally, Leech (1971:24) suggests that there is a "special polite use of the Progressive" with certain verbs of inert perception. He compares the following:

(9) I *hope* you'll give us some advice.

(10) I'*m hoping* you'll give us some advice.

He explains the difference as follows:

> *I hope you'll give us some advice* leaves the addressee little room for polite refusal; but *I am hoping* implies that the speaker has not finally committed himself to the hope: he is ready to change his mind about his feelings should the listener's reaction be discouraging.

Close (1977:79), comparing a similar pair of sentences,

(11) *a*. I *hope* you will come and have lunch with me.

b. I *am hoping* you will come and have lunch with me.

explains as follows:

> My own explanation is that a busy, self-important man might feel (*a*) to be too presumptuous, and refuse the invitation, but (*b*) flatteringly deferential and accept; while someone else to whom that invitation was given might feel (*a*) to be definitely meant, and accept with pleasure, but (*b*) to be uncertain and not sufficiently pressing.

These differences in meaning seem to derive from the nuances of the progressive which transforms the verb *hope* into a process verb, carrying an overtone of "incompletion." Therefore this seems to be neither a special use of the progressive nor its essential meaning. But it is important for learners of English as a foreign language to be able to recognize the differences of meaning that result from such different contexts or even personal attitudes.

State Verbs of Having and Being. Verbs of this category do not usually take the progressive, except when they take on an "activity" meaning, as Leech (1971:25) suggests. His explanation is:

> There is no difficulty with *She is being kind* because we are able to understand "kindness" here as a mode of outward behavior over which the person has control, rather than as an inherent trait of character. *She is being kind* means "She is acting kindly towards someone," whereas *She is kind* means "She is constitutionally good-natured."

He goes on to say:

> The Progressive is also permissible in *He's being good/useful/helpful/a nuisance/an angel*. Even if no recognized "activity" meaning is available, one may frequently make sense of a sentence *X is being Y*, however improbable the context, by reading into it the idea of acting a part. *Today, my uncle is being Napoleon* could be said of an actor or a megalomaniac. *He is being sorry/afraid/happy*, etc., could conceivably mean "He is pretending to be sorry/afraid/happy." A parallel though less likely example with the verb *have* is *My wife*

is having a headache meaning "My wife is pretending to have a headache."[4]

Though we can rather easily find the examples of the progressive with these verbs, and the ones with *be* in particular, the fact that most of them can be paraphrased by typical activity verbs such as *act, behave, do, pretend, say*, etc., shows that the progressive with these verbs has acquired the "activity" meaning; and it will easily be noticed that these verbs are no longer used as state verbs of having and being, but are clearly activity verbs. Besides, it seems to me that the overtone implies that the action is now being carried on actively and deliberately. This might be considered to be partly due to the temporariness of the progressive itself and partly due to the agency which must be necessarily involved in converting the stative verbs into activity verbs.

Now, as Leech (1971:26) also suggests, some of these verbs can take the progressive when accompanied by an expression like *more and more*. He gives the following example:

(12) He is resembling his father *more and more* as the years go by.

He thinks that the verb *resemble* in such a case is transformed into a process verb meaning "to become like" rather than "to be like." The following sentence

(13) He *is resembling* his father.

is indeed unacceptable, but sentence (12) is acceptable because it is followed by a comparative-degree phrase, which includes the implication of "process" and which helps even such a verb as *resemble* to change into a process verb. Thus, even state verbs of having and being can sometimes be used in the progressive with the meaning of either "activity" or "process," as can verbs of inert perception and inert cognition, discussed above.

Verbs of Bodily Sensation. As Leech (1971:22) suggests, when verbs of this class refer to a temporary state, they can occur either with or without the progressive. He explains:

> There is apparently a free choice, without change of meaning, between *I feel hungry* and *I am feeling hungry;* between *My knee hurts* and *My knee is hurting;* etc.

Although Quirk et al. (1972:95) classify these verbs as dynamic verbs, they state that they can have either simple or progressive aspect with little difference in meaning.

Hornby (1975:106) gives the following examples and comment:

(14) She's *feeling*/She *feels* better today. (There is little to choose between the members of this pair.)

These verbs, then, can be used either in the simple present or in the progressive with little difference in meaning, the two forms usually being interchangeable. Hatcher (1951:261) remarks:

> The progressive, the invader construction, has not yet driven out the simple form from every predication of an activity obviously in progress.

This is an interesting comment on the history of the progressive.

CONCLUSION

We have seen that the progressive with dynamic verbs can indicate either (1) an action in progress or in continuity or (2) the process of an action, depending on the semantic features of the verb. In case (1), activity verbs are used, and the progressive with these verbs can indicate either (*a*) an action that is being carried on at the time of speaking in a narrow sense, or (*b*) repetition, habit, etc., in a broad sense. In case (2), transitional-event verbs and process verbs are used, and the progressive with these verbs can indicate either (*a*) the process of an action in a narrow sense, or (*b*) schedule, future, volition, etc., in a broad sense. With momentary verbs, the progressive has both functions: in case (1) it indicates repetition, and in case (2) action caught as if on slow-motion film, (immediate) future, etc.

The progressive of stative verbs can be considered to some extent parallel to the progressive of dynamic verbs. That is to say, there are two uses of the progressive with stative verbs: (1) the case in which the verbs are transformed into activity verbs, and (2) the case in which they are transformed into process verbs. In case (1), the subject can freely control his action by his own will, and the features [+active], [+self-controllable], [+volitional], etc., characterize the progressive. (Incidentally, it is natural that the progressive with *be, have, live*, for example, suggests limited duration or temporariness, since the time spans of duration that stative verbs inherently have tend to be limited automatically by the very nature of the progressive, through which these verbs are changed into activity verbs.) In case (2), conversely, the features mentioned above do not characterize the progressive; instead, a comparative-degree word or phrase is often present, to indicate the process in which a gradual change is taking place. Thus the progressive of stative verbs can generally be considered as following a parallel course to that of dynamic verbs, except that in the case of verbs of bodily sensation, the progressive and the simple present can be used interchangeably with little difference in meaning.

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[4] Whitcomb gave, as a much more likely example, *My wife is having* one of her *headaches*, commenting as follows: "This is quite often said of a lady who habitually pretends to have a headache and so gets out of doing something she doesn't want to do."

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Practicing Stress and Intonation continued from page 18

blackboard, say it clearly and carefully, then dictate a few numbers to the class. Then ask each student to dictate his number to another student, who will then dictate it back to you for the blackboard. Make an intentional mistake or two to see whether they catch you, and whether they point out the mistake correctly ("No, not *3*46, *2*46!"). I would suggest dictating telephone numbers frequently until the students are quite good at this; they can also do number dictation from a tape.

16. Build up a wrong-number dialogue:

A: Hello. Is this 84357?
B: No (sound annoyed!), it's 84257. You've got the wrong number.
A: Oh! Sorry.
(or: B: Yes it is. Who's this? A: It's Marcello.)

You can pass out cue cards with matching or nonmatching telephone numbers to stimulate pair work with a surprise element.

17. Show incredulity. This is a variation of #8 (echoed questions), but here only the incredible part is echoed. Man-on-another-planet-type situations work well here (or visiting an exotic country):

A: We eat plastic flowers here on Venus.
B: Plastic flowers???
A: Yes, and we smoke cigarettes made out of chewing gum.
B: Chewing gum???
A: Yes, of course. They cost about 10,000 lire each.
B: 10,000 lire each???
A: Well, you can also buy them second-hand.
B: Second-hand???

and so on.

Many experienced teachers of English pronunciation place the need for accurate stress and intonation above the need for accurate individual sounds.[2] The suprasegmental features—stress, rhythm, and intonation—not only carry meaning, but are more stable and consistent than many segmental phonemes (especially vowel sounds) if we compare the pronunciation of different varieties of English. Furthermore, native speakers often make allowances for errors of pronunciation involving segmental phonemes; they rarely realize that learners also make systematic errors of stress and intonation. These errors, therefore, are more likely to impede communication. Our teaching must give high priority to this feature of the spoken language.

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[2] See, for example, Wilkins, *Linguistics in Language Teaching*, p. 45; and Gimson, *A Practical Course of English Pronunciation*, p. 3.

□

Listen to Aesop

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In many lands English is an academic study, and listening comprehension is of less importance than the ability to read and write. As a consequence, this skill gets more lip service than ear training.

Whether or not it is basic to other skills is not as important as the fact that postgraduate studies abroad require listening skills; hence, these listening passages were initially developed more than a decade ago, when the author was a Peace Corps volunteer at a language institute training Thai government officials to study overseas. They have since been through several revisions, so that they now incorporate many features particularly useful for nonnative listeners.

Content of the exercises

Aesop's fables were chosen as the basis for these exercises because students had studied the stories in their native language in elementary grades, and so were familiar with the "plots." This allows attention to focus on the language of expression, rather than on what is expressed.

The fact that animals speak and act like humans in the fables is as strong a cross-cultural factor as the stories' probable origin thousands of years ago. Every culture passes on its wisdom in this way, and the moralities so taught are adult in nature to such an extent that the practices have often given rise to conversation and debates in advanced classes.

The eight practices have been ordered according to (1) length, (2) difficulty of sentence structures, and (3) complexity of expressions. I have made no attempt to grade the vocabulary. Most advanced students have conquered the misconception that to learn words is to learn a language; therefore I have provided only a minimal "vocabulary and idiom" section at the beginning of each exercise, leaving the matter of introducing new vocabulary in the hands of the individual teacher.

Presenting the exercises

After the listening passage is read twice, the questions are asked twice, with pauses so that students may fill in blanks on their answer sheets. The answer sheets contain only a "vocabulary and idioms" list and answer blanks; at no time does the student see either the listening passage or the questions. Thus, sole reliance must be placed on what is heard. Experiments with the passages show that in trying to "read along" while listening, students do neither effectively: higher scores were recorded when the passage was either read or heard, and it can be theorized that the spoken input provides only distraction if the passages are to be used for reading comprehension.

Most of the answers to the "alternative questions" and "information questions" (that is, the answers to all except the "yes-or-no questions") should consist of a word or short phrase. Such "short answers" are more realistic—more functionally communicative—than answers that repeat the words of the question (a habit that students acquire at the lower levels of English instruction). "Echo verbs" are stressed—most heavily in the exercises for "The Ant and the Grasshopper"—because Thai students (among many others) tend to repeat the principal verb:

> *Question:* Who saw a juicy bunch of grapes?
> *Answer:* *The fox saw.

In yes-or-no questions, the emphatic form of answers is demanded for the above reason, as well as because variant question forms are drilled:

—Isn't it hot today?
—It's hot today, isn't it?
—It isn't hot today, is it?
—It's hot today, right?

These are forms of *Is it hot today?* Depending on the weather, native speakers would say, *Yes, it is* or *No, it isn't*, but nonnatives might answer **Yes, it isn't* or **No, it is*.

All the listening passages can be used as tests, with 100 points countable per test. A batch of these tests can be graded just as quickly as a multiple-choice quiz by individual teachers.

Scores tend to improve steadily after the fifth story, and we have observed a close correlation with scores on dictation quizzes. The only real difference between the two techniques is, apparently, that "Listen to Aesop" is more fun.

* * *

EDITOR'S NOTE: The following are scripts for eight Aesop's fables, with listening-comprehension questions prepared by Donald Bott. All of these stories are read on the recorded disc that is included in this issue of the ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM. For two of the stories ("Sour Grapes" and "The Stag's Antlers") the entire script is read, including the questions, with pauses to allow the students to write the answers in the blank spaces on the answer sheets. (The answer sheets and correct answers appear in separate sections immediately following the story scripts.) Because of the limited space on the disc, the other six stories are simply read once, without questions. A teacher who wishes to use these stories for listening practice in the way Mr. Bott suggests may read the questions from the script himself, or have a colleague read them, using as a model the two exercises presented in full on the disc. (The length of the pauses will be determined by the needs of the individual class.) If it is possible to have one or more native speakers of English voice the questions, that might provide an additional benefit.

Sour Grapes

A fox, who hadn't had a square meal in days, slipped into a vineyard one morning. He saw a juicy, ripe bunch of grapes hanging from a vine overhead. He jumped for them, but they were just out of reach. "Oh, well," he panted. "Those grapes were probably sour, anyway."

Yes-or-No Questions

1. Was the fox hungry?
2. Did the fox slip into a barnyard one morning?
3. Did the fox see a bunch of grapes?
4. Were the grapes sour?
5. Were the grapes ripe?
6. Did the fox jump for the grapes?
7. Were the grapes within the fox's reach?
8. Could the fox reach the grapes?
9. Did the fox want the grapes when he first saw them?
10. Did the fox want the grapes when they were out of reach?

Alternative Questions

1. Did the fox slip into a barnyard or a vineyard?
2. Were the grapes hanging from a vine or from a tree?
3. When he first saw them did the fox think that the grapes were juicy or sour?
4. When they were out of reach, did the fox think that the grapes were juicy or sour?

Information Questions

1. Who slipped into a vineyard one morning?
2. When did the fox slip into the vineyard?
3. What did the fox see in the vineyard?
4. Where were the grapes?
5. What did the fox do when he saw the grapes?

The Stupid Donkey

A hungry lion slipped out of the forest into a barnyard one evening. When he saw a plump donkey, his mouth began to water. But just as he was ready to jump on the donkey, a rooster crowed. He was frightened, and so turned away into the forest again. "Hey, look at that cowardly lion," the donkey brayed to the rooster. "I'm going to chase him." And the donkey ran after the lion. "Wait!" the rooster shouted, "you don't know that . . ." But it was too late. The lion had turned and killed the donkey. "Ah, my poor, stupid friend," the rooster said as he watched the lion eating the donkey. "The lion wasn't afraid of you, but of my crowing."

Yes-or-No Questions

1. Was the lion hungry?
2. Did he see a bunch of grapes?
3. Did he turn away when the rooster crowed?
4. Did the donkey chase the lion?
5. Was the lion afraid of the donkey?
6. Did the donkey kill the lion?
7. Did the lion kill the rooster?
8. Did the lion kill the donkey?
9. Was the rooster sad when the donkey was killed?
10. Should the donkey have chased the lion?

Alternative Questions

1. Did the lion slip out of the forest or out of the barnyard?
2. Did the lion jump on the donkey or on the rooster?
3. Was the lion afraid of the donkey's bray or of the rooster's crow?
4. Did the donkey or the rooster chase the lion?

Information Questions

1. Who slipped out of the forest one evening?
2. What did the lion see in the barnyard?
3. When did the lion slip into the barnyard?
4. When did the lion turn away into the forest again?
5. Why did the donkey chase the lion?

The Donkey and the Lion's Skin

A donkey—not the same one as in the second story, but one just as stupid—found a lion's skin in the forest one afternoon. He put it on and went to the barnyard to frighten the other animals. "Hee-haw, I'm a lion," the donkey brayed at a rooster. "That's a pretty stupid joke," the rooster said. "Even though you look like a lion, anyone can tell you're a donkey as soon as you open your mouth."

Yes-or-No Questions

1. Did a donkey find a lion's skin in the barnyard?
2. Did the donkey find the lion's skin in the forest?
3. Was the donkey frightened of the lion's skin?
4. Did the donkey put the lion's skin on?
5. Did the donkey try to frighten a rooster?
6. Was the rooster frightened?
7. Did the rooster recognize the donkey?
8. Did the donkey look like a lion?
9. Could the rooster tell the difference between a donkey and a lion?
10. Was the donkey stupid to open his mouth?

Alternative Questions

1. Did the donkey find the lion's skin in the forest or in the barnyard?
2. Did the donkey put the lion's skin on or run away from it?
3. Did the donkey try to frighten a lion or a rooster?
4. Did the donkey look like a lion, or like a donkey?
5. Did the rooster recognize the donkey, or was he afraid?

Information questions

1. Who found a lion's skin?
2. Where did the donkey find the lion's skin?
3. What did the donkey do with the lion's skin?
4. Why did the donkey put the lion's skin on?
5. Why wasn't the rooster frightened?

The Dove and the Hawks

A chicken grower set a trap for hawks that had been attacking his flock. One afternoon he found a dove in his net. "Let me go. I'm not a hawk," the dove begged. The chicken grower agreed, "Maybe not. But I'm not going to let you go. You're as bad as they are, if you're with them. After all, birds of a feather flock together."

Yes-or-No Questions

1. Did a chicken grower try to catch doves?
2. Did the chicken grower try to catch hawks?
3. Had the doves been attacking his chickens?
4. Had the hawks been attacking his chickens?
5. Did the chicken grower find a dove in his trap one afternoon?
6. Did the dove ask the chicken grower to free him?
7. Did the chicken grower think that the dove was a hawk?
8. Did the chicken grower free the dove?
9. Was the dove sometimes with the hawks?
10. Did the chicken grower think the dove was as bad as the hawks?

Alternative Questions

1. Did the chicken grower set a trap for doves or for hawks?
2. Had doves or hawks been attacking his chickens?
3. Did the chicken grower find a hawk or a dove in his net one afternoon?
4. Did the dove ask the chicken grower to free him, or to flee him?
5. Did the chicken grower think that the dove was better than, or as bad as, the hawks?

Information Questions

1. Who set a trap for hawks?
2. What had been attacking the chicken grower's flock?
3. When did the chicken grower catch a dove in his net?
4. What did the dove do when the chicken grower came?
5. What reason did the chicken grower give for not freeing the dove?

The Ant and the Grasshopper

While a grasshopper was taking it easy in the shade on a hot summer's day, an ant struggled in the sun with a grain of rice that he was carrying out to his nest. "Hey, Mister Ant," the grasshopper said. "Why don't you take it easy, like me? You can work tomorrow." The ant paused. "I'm saving up food now for the cold winter ahead, and if you know what's good for you, you'll do the same," he said. Three or four months later, winter came and it was very cold. While the ant was snug in his nest, the starving grasshopper shivered under a pile of dead leaves and wished that he'd paid attention to the ant's advice.

Yes-or-No Questions

1. Was the grasshopper taking it easy one hot summer's day?
2. Was the grasshopper working one hot summer's day?
3. Did the ant work in the sun?
4. Did the ant rest in the shade?
5. Did the ant have a grain of rice?
6. Did the grasshopper invite the ant to take it easy?
7. The ant was working to save up food for the winter ahead, wasn't he?
8. Is it hot in the summer?
9. Is it cold in the winter?
10. The grasshopper didn't follow the ant's advice, did he?

Alternative Questions

1. Was the grasshopper or the ant taking it easy one hot summer's day?
2. Was the grasshopper in the shade or in the sun?
3. Was the ant in the shade or in the sun?
4. Was the ant or the grasshopper struggling with a grain of rice?
5. Did the ant advise the grasshopper, or the grasshopper advise the ant, to take it easy?

"Who" Questions

1. Who was taking it easy in the shade one hot summer's day?
2. Who was working in the sun one hot summer's day?
3. Who was saving up food for the cold winter ahead?
4. Who continued loafing?
5. Who continued working?
6. Who was snug in his nest when winter came?
7. Who was very hungry when winter came?
8. Who advised working?
9. Who didn't follow the advice?
10. Who stayed under a pile of dead leaves in the winter?

Information Questions

1. What was the grasshopper doing one hot summer's day?
2. What was the ant doing one hot summer's day?
3. What advice did the ant give the grasshopper?
4. What was the weather like when winter came?
5. Where was the grasshopper when he met the ant?
6. When did the grasshopper meet the ant?
7. When did it get cold?
8. Where was the ant in winter?
9. Where was the grasshopper in winter?
10. How did the grasshopper spend the summer?
11. How did the ant spend the summer?
12. How did the grasshopper spend the winter?
13. How did the ant spend the winter?
14. Why was the ant working one hot summer's day?
15. Why did the grasshopper not take the ant's advice?

The Stag's Antlers

A stag admired his reflection in a pool of water one day. "My! But my antlers are very handsome," he thought. "Just look at my poor skinny legs, though. They look as if they could hardly bear my weight." Just then a lion leaped from the bushes at the edge of the water hole, and the frightened stag ran across the open field. He could run much faster than the lion, who was quickly left behind. But when the stag ran into the forest at the other side of the field, he ran into trouble. His antlers became tangled in some vines hanging from a tree. As the lion was catching up with him, the stag struggled frantically to free himself, and thought: "What a fool I am! As long as I could use my skinny legs, I could outrun that lion. But here I am now, trapped by the antlers I admired so much."

Yes-or-No Questions

1. Did a stag look at himself in a pool of water one day?

2. Did the stag think that his antlers were ugly?
3. Did he think that his legs were ugly?
4. The stag could run faster than the lion in the open field, couldn't he?
5. The lion caught the stag in the forest, didn't he?

Alternative Questions

1. Did the stag admire his antlers or his legs?
2. Did the stag run faster or slower than the lion in the open field?
3. Were his legs or his antlers really of more help to the stag?

Information Questions

1. What did the stag admire his reflection in?
2. What did the stag think was handsome?
3. What did the stag think was weak?
4. Why couldn't the lion catch the stag in the open field?
5. Why could the lion catch up with the stag in the forest?
6. How did the stag feel about his antlers after they'd trapped him?
7. How did the stag feel about his legs after he'd outrun the lion in the open field?

The Lion and the Mouse

A lion, who was stalking a deer in the forest, almost stepped on a mouse one morning. "Please Mister Lion," squeaked the mouse. "Don't eat me. Why, I'd barely be a mouthful for you." "You're right," said the lion, and he carefully stepped around the tiny creature. Later that same day, the mouse found the lion trapped in a net which had been set by hunters to capture wild animals. With his sharp teeth, the mouse soon gnawed through the tangles in the net, and the lion was free. "Thanks a lot, little friend. Now, how can I repay you? the lion asked. "Never mind," the mouse said. "After all, you let me go free earlier today, and one good turn deserves another."

Yes-or-No Questions

1. The lion didn't step on the mouse, did he?
2. The lion didn't eat the mouse, did he?
3. Was the lion hunting the mouse?
4. Was the lion hunting a deer?
5. Did the mouse have sharp teeth?
6. The mouse was small, wasn't he?
7. Was the lion captured in a net?
8. The mouse didn't free the lion, did he?
9. Was the lion grateful?
10. The mouse didn't want to be repaid, did he?

Alternative Questions

1. Was the lion hunting a deer or a mouse?
2. Was the mouse large or small?
3. Did the lion step on or around the mouse?
4. Did the mouse find the lion in a net or in a pit?

Information Questions

1. What was the lion hunting in the forest?
2. What did the lion almost step on?
3. Where were the lion and the mouse?
4. Who almost stepped on the mouse?
5. Who had set a trap for wild animals?
6. What was the reason that the mouse freed the lion from the trap?
7. How did the mouse free the lion?
8. Why didn't the mouse want to be repaid?
9. Why had hunters set a trap?
10. What kind of trap was it?

Pleasing Everyone

Since an old man and his son wanted to sell their donkey at the village market far away from their home, they had to take the animal along a dusty country road to the town. They had just left their home when a neighbor called to them. "Why are both of you walking, when you have a donkey?" the neighbor asked. "One of you ride, and the other can lead him." "That's a good idea," the old man said, and put his son on the donkey while he continued to lead. They were about halfway to town when three women standing by the side of the road scolded the boy. "You should be ashamed of yourself, riding while your father has to walk," one of the women said. "Is the donkey so weak that he can't carry both of you?"

"You're right, I guess," the old man said. "Let me get on behind you, son." The donkey, carrying the old man and his son, had almost reached the town when a group of villagers began laughing at them. "You should be carrying that poor beast, instead of making him carry both of you," one of the villagers said. "I suppose so," the old man said reluctantly as he and his son got down. With the help of the still-laughing villagers, they tied the animal to a pole so that they could carry it the rest of the way to the market. But as they were crossing the bridge just before the marketplace, the donkey kicked loose from the pole and fell into the stream and drowned. "Our donkey is dead now, and it should teach us," the old man said sadly to his son. "Whenever we try to please everyone, we lose."

Yes-or-No Questions

1. The old man and his son wanted to sell their donkey, didn't they?
2. Wasn't their home near the village?
3. A neighbor advised the old man and his son, didn't he?
4. Did the old man and his son follow the neighbor's advice?
5. Weren't they halfway to town when three women saw them?
6. Did one of the women advise the old man and his son?
7. Didn't the old man and his son follow the woman's advice?
8. Did both of them ride the donkey?
9. Weren't they halfway to town when a group of villagers saw them?
10. Weren't they riding the donkey when the villagers saw them?
11. Did one of the villagers advise the old man and his son?
12. The old man and his son followed the villager's advice, right?
13. Was there a bridge just before the marketplace?
14. The old man and his son didn't cross the bridge with their donkey, did they?
15. Did the old man and his son sell the donkey at the marketplace?

Alternative Questions

1. Was the village market near or far away from the home of the old man and his son?
2. Did the old man and his son want to sell their donkey or their horse?
3. Did three women or three men scold the boy?
4. Before they met the villagers was the donkey carrying the old man and his son, or were they carryng him?
5. Did the donkey drown, or was he sold at the marketplace?

Information Questions

1. What did the old man and his son want to sell?
2. Who advised one of them to ride the donkey?
3. Who scolded the boy?
4. When did they meet three women standing at the side of the road?
5. When did they meet a group of villagers?
6. What did the group of villagers advise the old man and his son to do?
7. What happened when the old man and his son tried to carry the donkey across the bridge?
8. Why was the old man sad at the end of the story?
9. Why was it impossible for them to please everyone?
10. Since it's impossible to please everyone, who should we try to please, and why?

ANSWER SHEETS FOR THE STORIES

Sour Grapes

I Vocabulary and Idioms

fox
a square meal
slipped
vineyard
juicy
vine
overhead
jumped
panted
hungry
barnyard
first saw
probably

II Yes-or-No Questions

1. ________, it was.
2. Yes, it ________.
3. ________,it did.
4. No, they ________.
5. ________, they were.
6. Yes, he ________.
7. ________, they weren't.
8. No, he ________.
9. ________, he did.
10. No, he ________.

III Alternative Questions

1. He ________ into a vineyard.
2. They ________ hanging from a ________.
3. He ________ for them.
4. When he first ________ them, he thought they were ________.
5. when they were out of reach, he ________ they were ________.

IV Information Questions

1. A ________ did.
2. One ________ .
3. A juicy ________ of ________ .
4. On a ________ overhead.
5. He ________ for them.

The Stupid Donkey

I Vocabulary and Idioms

lion
forest
plump
donkey
mouth began to water
rooster
crow (*v.*)
frighten
turn away

chase
wait
shouted
brayed
afraid
kill
sad
poor
too late

II Yes-or-No Questions

1. Yes, he _______ .
2. No, he _______ .
3. Yes, he _______ .
4. Yes, he _______ .
5. No, he _______ .
6. No, he _______ .
7. No, he _______ .
8. Yes, he _______ .
9. Yes, he _______ .
10. _______, he shouldn't have.

III Alternative Questions

1. He slipped out of the _______ .
2. He _______ on the _______ .
3. He _______ afraid of the rooster's _______ .
4. The _______ _______ the _______ .

IV Information Questions

1. A _______ _______ .
2. A _______ .
3. One _______ .
4. When he _______ the _______ crow.
5. Because he ___ ___ the lion _______ cowardly.

The Donkey in the Lion's Skin

I Vocabulary and Idioms

just as
skin
put something on
hee-haw
pretty
even though

look like
anyone can tell
joke
as soon as
open . . . mouth
recognize

II Yes-or-No Questions

1. _______, he _______ .
2. _______, he _______ .
3. _______, he _______ .
4. _______, he _______ .
5. _______, he _______ .
6. _______, he _______ .
7. _______, he _______ .
8. _______, he _______ .
9. _______, he _______ .
10. _______, he _______ .

III Alternative Questions

1. He _______ it _______ the _______ .
2. He _______ _______ _______ .
3. He _______ _______ _______ a _______ .
4. He _______ _______ a _______ .
5. He _______ the _______ .

IV Information Questions

1. A _______ _______ .
2. In the _______ .
3. He _______ _______ _______ .
4. To _______ _______ _______ _______ .
5. Because _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ .

The Dove and the Hawks

I Vocabulary and Idioms

dove
hawk
chicken grower
trap
after all
flock (*v.*)

net
begged
as bad as
of a feather
maybe not
flock (*n.*)

II Yes-or-No Questions

1. _______, he _______ .
2. _______, he _______ .
3. _______, _______ hadn't seen.
4. _______, had seen.
5. _______, he _______ .
6. _______, _______ did.
7. _______, he _______ .
8. _______, he _______ .
9. _______, he _______ .
10. _______, he _______ .

III Alternative Questions

1. He _______ a trap for _______ .
2. _______ _______ been _______ his flock.
3. He _______ a _______ in his _______ one afternoon.

4. He _______ the chicken grower to _______ him.
5. He _______ the dove _______ _______ _______ _______ the hawks.

IV Information Questions

1. A _______ grower _______ .
2. _______ had _______ attacking the _______ grower's flock.
3. One _______ .
4. He _______ the _______ was _______ _______ _______ the _______ because _______ of a _______ _______ _______ .

The Ant and the Grasshopper

I Vocabulary and Idioms

grasshopper
taking it easy
paused
shade
ant
snug

saving up
struggled
shivered
loafing
starving
pay attention to

II Yes-or-No Questions

1. _______, he _______.
2. _______, he _______ .
3. _______, he _______ .
4. _______, he _______ .
5. _______, he _______ .
6. _______, he _______ .
7. Yes, he _______ .
8. _______, _______ _______ .
9. _______, _______ _______ .
10. No, he _______ .

III Alternative Questions

1. The _______ _______
2. _______ the _______ .
3. _______ the _______ .
4. The _______ _______ .
5. The _______ _______ the _______ to take it easy.

IV "Who" Questions

1. The _______ _______ .
2. The _______ _______ .
3. The _______ _______ .
4. The _______ _______ .
5. The _______ _______ .
6. The _______ _______ .
7. The _______ _______ .
8. The _______ _______ .
9. The _______ _______ .
10. The _______ _______ .

V Information Questions

1. He _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ the _______ .
2. He _______ _______ _______ a _______ of _______ .
3. He _______ the _______ to _______ _______ _______ _______ the cold _______ _______ .
4. It _______ _______ .
5. He _______ _______ the _______ .
6. In the _______ .
7. _______ the _______ .
8. _______ his _______ .
9. _______ a _______ of _______ _______ .
10. _______ing.
11. _______ing.
12. _______ing and _______ing.
13. _______ .
14. To _______ _______ _______ _______ the cold _______ .
15. Because _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ .

The Stag's Antlers

I Vocabulary and Idioms

stag
outrun
pool of water
or water hole
handsome
bear (*v.*)
admired
tangle
and untangle

frantically
the other side
antlers
reflection
my!
just then
ran into trouble
catch up
left behind

II Yes-or-No Questions

1. _______, he _______ .
2. _______, he _______ .
3. _______, he _______ .
4. _______, he _______ .
5. _______, he _______ .

III Alternative Questions

1. His _______ .
2. _______ .
3. His _______ .

IV Information Questions

1. A _______ of _______ .
2. His _______ .
3. His _______ .
4. Because the _______ could run faster.
5. Because the stag's _______ became _______ in some vines.
6. He felt he _______ foolish to _______ admired them.
7. He felt he was foolish to have _______ they were _______ .

The Lion and the Mouse

I Vocabulary and Idioms

stalking
deer
forest
mouse
squeaked
thanks a lot
earlier
barely
mouthful
carefully
tiny
creature
repay
good turn
hunters
wild
sharp
grawed
tangles
never mind
deserves

II Yes-or-No Questions

1. _______, he _______ .
2. _______, he _______ .
3. _______, he _______ .
4. _______, he _______ .
5. _______, he _______ .
6. _______, he _______ .
7. _______, he _______ .
8. _______, he _______ .
9. _______, he _______ .
10. _______, he _______ .

III Alternative Questions

1. A _______ .
2. _______ .
3. He stepped _______ the _______ .
4. He _______ the _______ in a _______ .

IV Information Questions

1. A _______ .
2. A _______ .
3. _______ the _______ .
4. The _______ .
5. _______ .
6. Because the lion _______ helped him.
7. By _______ing _______ the _______ of the _______ _______ his _______ _______ .
8. Because _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ .
9. To _______ _______ _______ .
10. A _______ .

Pleasing Everyone

I Vocabulary and Idioms

far away
dusty
country
neighbor
got on
scolded
ashamed
weak
guess
beast
reluctantly
pole
crossing
kicked loose
halfway
stream
the rest of the way
bridge
idea
suppose
drowned
just before
villagers
horrible

II Yes-or-No Questions

1. _______, _______ _______ .
2. _______, _______ _______ .
3. _______, _______ _______ .
4. _______, _______ _______ .
5. _______, _______ _______ .
6. _______, _______ _______ .
7. _______, _______ _______ .
8. _______, _______ _______ .
9. _______, _______ _______ .
10. _______, _______ _______ .
11. _______, _______ _______ .
12. _______, _______ _______ .
13. _______, _______ _______ .
14. _______, _______ _______ .
15. _______, _______ _______ .

III Alternative Questions

1. It _______ _______ _______ .
2. _______ _______ .
3. _______ _______.
4. They _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ _______ .
5. He _______ .

IV Information Questions

1. ________ ________ .
2. A ________ .
3. ________ ________ .
4. When ________ ________ ________ ________ ________.
5. When ________ ________ ________ ________ the ________.
6. To ________ ________ ________ .
7. It ________ ________, ________ ________ the ________, ________ ________ .
8. Because ________ ________ ________ ________ .
9. Because ________ ________ different ________ .
10. We should ________ ________ ________ ________ because ________'s ________ ________ ________. ________ .

ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Sour Grapes

Yes-or-No Questions: 1. Yes 2. did 3. Yes 4. weren't 5. Yes 6. did 7. No 8. couldn't 9. Yes 10. didn't

Alternative Questions: 1. slipped, vineyard 2. were, vine 3. saw, juicy 4. thought, sour

Information Questions: 1. fox 2. morning 3. bunch, grapes 4. vine 5. jumped

The Stupid Donkey

Yes-or-No Questions: 1. was 2. didn't 3. did 4. did 5. wasn't 6. didn't 7. didn't 8. did 9. was 10. No

Alternative Questions: 1. forest 2. jumped, donkey 3. was, crow 4. donkey, chased lion

Information Questions: 1. lion did 2. donkey 3. evening 4. heard, rooster's 5. thought, was

The Donkey in the Lion's Skin

Yes-or-No Questions: 1. No, didn't 2. Yes, did 3. No, wasn't 4. Yes, did 5. Yes, did 6. No, wasn't 7. Yes, did 8. Yes, did 9. Yes, could 10. Yes, was

Alternative Questions: 1. found, in, forest 2. put it on 3. tried to frighten, rooster 4. looked like, lion 5. recognized, donkey

Information Questions: 1. donkey did 2. forest 3. put it on 4. frighten the other animals 5. the donkey opened his mouth

The Dove and the Hawks

Yes-or-No Questions: 1. No, didn't 2. Yes, did 3. No, they 4. Yes, they 5. Yes, did 6. Yes, he 7. No, didn't 8. No, didn't 9. Yes, was 10. Yes, did

Alternative Questions: 1. set, hawks 2. Hawks had, attacking 3. found, dove, net 4. asked, free 5. thought. was as bad as

Information Questions: 1. chicken, did 2. Hawks, been, chicken 3. afternoon 4. said, dove, as bad as, hawks, birds, feather flock together

The Ant and the Grasshopper

Yes-or-No Questions: 1. Yes, was 2. No, wasn't 3. Yes, did 4. No, didn't 5. Yes, did 6. Yes, did 7. Was 8. Yes, it is 9. No, it isn't 10. didn't

Alternative Questions: 1. grasshopper was 2. in, shade 3. in, sun 4. ant was 5. grasshopper advised, ant

"Who" Questions: 1. grasshopper was 2. ant was 3. ant was 4. grasshopper did 5. ant did 6. ant was 7. grasshopper was 8. ant did 9. grasshopper didn't 10. grasshopper did

Information Questions: 1. was taking it easy in, shade 2. was struggling with, grain, rice 3. advised, grasshopper, save up food for, winter ahead 4. was cold 5. was in, shade 6. summer 7. In, winter 8. In, nest 9. Under, pile, dead leaves 10. Loaf . . . 11. Work . . . 12. Starve . . . , shiver . . . 13. Snug 14. save up food for, winter ahead 15. bit was too much trouble

The Stag's Antlers

Yes-or-No Questions: 1. Yes, did 2. No, didn't 3. Yes, did 4. Yes, could 5. Yes, did

Alternative Questions: 1. antlers 2. Faster 3. legs

Information Questions: 1. pool, water 2. antlers 3. legs 4. stag, faster 5. antlers, tangled 6. was, have 7. thought, ugly

The Lion and the Mouse

Yes-or-No Questions: 1. No, didn't 2. No, didn't 3. No, wasn't 4. Yes, was 5. Yes, did 6. Yes, was 7. Yes, was 8. Yes, did 9. Yes, was 10. No, didn't

Alternative Questions: 1. deer 2. Small 3. around, mouse 4. found, lion, net

Information Questions: 1. deer 2. mouse 3. In, forest 4. lion 5. Hunters 6. had 7. gnawing, through, tangles, net with sharp teeth 8. one good turn deserves another 9. capture wild animals 10. net

Pleasing Everyone

Yes-or-No Questions: 1. Yes, they did 2. No, it wasn't 3. Yes, he did 4. Yes, they did 5. Yes, they were 6. Yes, one did 7. Yes, they did 8. Yes, they did 9. No, they weren't 10. Yes, they were 11. yes, one did 12. Yes, they did 13. Yes, there was 14. No, they didn't 15. No, they didn't

Alternative Questions: 1. was far away 2. Their donkey 3. Three women 4. were being carried by the donkey 5. drowned

Information Questions: 1. Their donkey 2. neighbor 3. Three women 4. they were halfway to town 5. they had almost reached, town 6. carry the donkey 7. kicked loose, fell into, stream, and drowned 8. their donkey was dead 9. everyone had, advice 10. try to please ourselves, it's possible to do so □

TEACHERS TALK

On this and the following pages is a small sample of the responses to our invitation in the January 1982 issue for readers to write briefly about their professional concerns. We have not thought of this as a "contest" in which the "best" essays would be chosen for prizes, but rather as an opportunity for a cross-section of classroom teachers to express their feelings about their work. We are happy to say that we received many thoughtful and appealing contributions, and have read and profited from them all (and wish we could share them all with our readers). These communications have helped to confirm our high regard for the dedication of teachers of English in every country; they have heightened our awareness of the common purposes, challenges, and aspirations of our readers—however diverse their situations. They have also demonstrated a strong bond of professional fellowship and mutual interest, expressed in a readiness to share ideas to the end that all may progress as rapidly and happily as possible toward a worthwhile goal. What we have read has greatly encouraged us about the past progress and present and future prospects of this profession. Printed below are a few essays chosen from among the many excellent contributions received.

C.K. SESHADRI, Reader in English, Maharaja Sayajirao University of Baroda, Gujarat, India: At a time when new ideas and ideologies are being transmitted globally, and changes in thought and attitude in one part of the world affect people in another, it is English that is helping us to keep ourselves informed about developments taking place elsewhere in the world. It is the rich literature available in English, not only of the English-speaking peoples but also of others, that is enriching our lives directly and influencing several of our regional literatures indirectly. It is through English that we are able to communicate with and understand the world outside. Under the circumstances, I find it most rewarding that I am able to play a role in bringing about this understanding among peoples, and in adding a new dimension to their cultural experience.

Since so many of us in different parts of the world are engaged in teaching English as a second/foreign language, there seems to be considerable scope for exchange of ideas and experiences. I would welcome more opportunities for sharing our views at an informal level.

When I started teaching English, it was more "traditional." The emphasis was on grammar. The texts used were literary; they were English "classics." The class size was 120. Now I use texts that are contemporary both in language and in content. My focus is on communication. The class size is 50.

The one thing I would like to say to my colleagues around the world is to keep an open mind and not to lose heart. English-language teaching is much more complex than some of the theorists would have us believe. There is no one theory of learning, no one approach, no one method that is one hundred percent "correct" and therefore "successful." Also, the kind of distinction that is often made between teaching "language" and teaching "literature" is neither relevant nor necessary. Language is a means and literature is one of the ends. If we, as teachers of English, are able to provide our students with another view of life, we should feel encouraged.

A new teacher of English should remember that his role is that of a facilitator. His main task is to make his students' learning of English interesting, pleasant, and meaningful. In many cases, he may have to provide the model, too. Therefore, it is important that his own competence in the language be as near native as possible. Teaching calls for a tremendous amount of patience and perseverance; he should not readily give up. Some of the insights he may have gathered in psychology, linguistics, and methodology may prove helpful in organizing his teaching, but ultimately his success as a teacher of English will depend on himself and on his individual efforts. He may have to try out new strategies, evolve his own methods, and use techniques suited to his personality. He should always keep an open mind and be willing to experiment and learn.

ROBERTO CODA, Biella, Italy: As a would-be musician, frustrated in not achieving my youthful dreams, I felt that becoming a teacher was a sacrifice when, in 1975, I began teaching adults in evening classes in a small country school. Now, after seven years in this profession, I find it most rewarding because of the opportunity it provides to be among people, and the incomparable experience of getting a response from your audience when you have done your best to meet their needs and interests.

I undervalued my work at the beginning. I thought a teacher was a kind of ham who tried to amuse his audience and capture their attention by being theatrical. But it is not that—or at least not only that. First of all, a teacher should be fully aware of his students' needs. He should not be afraid to experiment with new ways of teaching, promptly recording their results and evaluating their effectiveness. A new technique is worth trying, and you can always give it up if it proves unsatisfactory. Also, we should not forget that our main goal is to teach our students how to use what they learn. A language is not an end in itself; it is a means to an end.

I believe that we should not make distinctions between "new" and "old" methods and "good" and "bad" theories. Each class—indeed, each student—is different from every other with regard to many variables—sociocultural background, motivation, age, etc.—and the teacher's major task is to find the best way to work in the special situation (it's always special) he has to cope with. So don't worry too much about criticism, and choose what you think is right.

ALAN CUNNINGSWORTH, Senior Lecturer, Christ Church College, Canterbury, England: One of the most satisfying and rewarding aspects of teaching English is helping to equip students with linguistic knowledge and communicative skills that relate to their lives outside the classroom as both individuals and members of social groups. The use of language and the development of the individual as a unique social being seem so closely interwoven as to be virtually inseparable, and in teaching English, the predominant world language, I feel that I am helping my students to acquire something central to their personal and professional needs.

One of the main changes during the fifteen years I have been involved in EFL teaching and teacher training is a switch in emphasis from the teaching of the formal features of the language (mechanical and noncommunicative grammar exercises and the like) to the teaching of meaning and of language in use. There has also been a certain amount of movement away from viewing language as the main focus of the teacher's attention, towards seeing the student as being of prime importance in the learning process. This can result in a healthy focus on learning rather than teaching.

As in other areas of human activity, there has unfortunately been a pendulum effect where an older approach, such as structure-based teaching, has been dumped temporarily when a newer approach has appeared on the scene. With time, newer developments are usually accommodated to the more orthodox procedures of language teaching, but sadly often not before a good deal of time and energy has been expended on sterile controversy. I would like to see a more mature approach to innovation and a greater confidence on the part of teachers in some of our time-tested procedures. This should be linked to a flexibility which allows new ideas to be embraced (but without throwing out the good with the bad in traditional methods) and a creativity in responding to new challenges.

A piece of advice that I should like to give to other teachers of English is this: keep your learners' needs and aspirations at the front of your mind every time you plan a lesson or teach a class. What your students do in class should contribute to attaining this overall objective. Don't teach for teaching's sake. A "good" lesson that does not help the learners progress towards their goals cannot really be called good. Don't use an activity in class *just* because it's a good activity or because the students like it or because it fills in nicely at the end of a lesson: first, and above all, match what your students actually do and learn to do by taking part in that activity against the overall objectives. If there is a good match, then go ahead. If there's a mismatch, think again.

TONY CHAN, La Salle Provincialate, Petaling Jaya, Malaysia: A local writer in Malaysia describes the job of the English teacher as follows:

> The job requires dedication: he should show it;
> The job requires imagination and creativity: he should have it;
> The job demands devotion: he should put a lot of hard work into it;
> The job calls for a lot of personal sacrifice: the question is how much?

Less than a decade ago, all subjects in our schools were taught in English. Today, the situation is entirely different. All subjects are now taught in our national language, Bahasa Malaysia. Higher institutions of learning are in a transitional stage in this conversion.

The English being taught in Malaysian schools now is English as a *foreign* language. Our students learn English as just another subject in the school curriculum. The English teacher is having to emerge from what was a "dormant" position to a very important and "active" position. He has to play an even more important part than before, and that is what inspired a local writer to write the verses above.

Most of the teachers of this generation went to English-medium schools (that is, they learned English as a *second* language), and so they experience disappointment when they go into today's school and find that the standard of English has dropped drastically. But all is not lost: this situation has challenged them to push harder in terms of creativity and devotion in order to make English a much more interesting subject than before. The use of audiovisual aids is no longer just important, but has become necessary, primarily to arouse interest and to elicit conversation.

My philosophy of teaching English is to create a friendly atmosphere where students can converse and learn at the same time. We also need to create in them an awareness of the importance of knowing an international language and to inspire them to use English at home.

Challenging conditions should not lessen the English teacher's determination and devotion. They should, rather, spur us on to achieve what could not have been achieved before. Many teachers around the world face a similar problem, but if they are willing to sacrifice their time and talent for the sake of a class of young boys or girls, they will achieve results—perhaps not immediately, but who knows?—it could be a stepping-stone. And there is always the consolation of a job well done!

Perhaps it would be fitting to add another line to the verses quoted above:

> The job calls for patience, understanding, and perseverance; and that is the "very much" I can give!

JULIO B. FUENTES, Instituto Nacional de Bachillerato "Lucia de Medrano," Salamanca, Spain: Being a teacher of English means to me:

- sharing with others the experience of acquiring a virtually universal language
- communication in its widest sense
- helping others communicate, or, in other words, opening up the road for them to "friendship without frontiers."

It also means an everlasting challenge if I keep my mind open to all methods and didactic innovations.

Some of the results of our teaching are immediately perceivable, but some are only eventually perceivable or even imperceptible, to the teacher. The pupils' progress, often reflected in their general attitude towards both their teacher and the subject they are studying—noticeable by their brighter faces and spontaneous participation in class—can be reward enough. Even more rewarding are those occasions, however rare, when a former student affectionately comes up to you in the street, recalls the good old days, and shows appreciation for your part in his education.

Of paramount importance in my teaching was the change from the written to the oral approach. I remember the teachers of that summer course insisting that we should "teach English, not about English." Next comes the use of monolingual dictionaries: it is mainly thanks to them that I soon learned how to *think in English*.

To a new teacher I would give two pieces of advice: first, to get his pupils to love English; second, to teach them how to think in English from the very outset.

BABAKAR NDIAYE, Assistant ELT Adviser, Ministry of National Education, Senegal: I was young and rather quixotic about teaching English when I started. My head was full of the new ideas I had assimilated at the Teacher Training College, and which I was dying to put into practice. "When you want your fish to swim, you must drop it into the river," I used to repeat to myself, paraphrasing a wise teacher whose name I no longer remember. So in class I submerged the learners in a flow of language by speaking English all the time. I could feel that they were mesmerized by what I said. This was enough to fill my heart with great joy. I felt convinced that real learning was taking place, for whenever I asked a question, I was sure to get an eager reply.

In my desire to better myself as a teacher, I read widely. One day I came across an obvious yet surprising idea which prompted me to ask myself, "Who exactly is doing the talking in my English classes? Whose English am I to work on in order to improve it?" It was then I realized that, despite my good intentions, I was not doing enough for my classes. They may have been mesmerized, but many were also bewildered.

This was a revelation. From then on I gave my pupils the opportunity to ask each other questions in English as well as to answer them. Soon I noticed that there was a lot more learner activity in my class, and they enjoyed this new departure. Henceforward, I deliberately tried to reduce my role from that of a teacher/lecturer to that of an encouraging observer. I became aware that not only were the children learning more, but I was learning more about them, too.

And so I learned to resist the temptation to be the cynosure of all eyes—though I must admit it was not easy for me to force myself to fade away; and at first it was even more difficult for the learners, who felt insecure without my direct intervention.

That was all ten years ago now, but the ideal of more learner-learning and less teacher-teaching is one that I have striven for ever since. Paradoxically, by trying to become less of a teacher, I feel I have become a better one.

MRS. JUDITH A. LISING, Teacher, Ramon Magsaysay (Cubao) High School, Quezon City, Philippines: I've always loved my work as an English teacher. I find truth in the lines "Whatever level of training, whatever the tools they are given to work with, teachers, probably more than the general run of humanity, find their life in their work." Teaching English is always a challenge, and it is most rewarding when students exhibit their hidden talents through proper motivation. I believe that a teacher should not be continually thundering instructions into the ears of his students as if he were pouring knowledge through a funnel, but should induce them to think, to distinguish, and to find out things for themselves, sometimes opening the way, at other times leaving it for them to open.

Though English is a tough subject for our students, I often find them liking it. Maybe this is because of the way I awaken their interest and kindle their enthusiasm—important factors in teaching easily and successfully, and for which I owe a lot to the FORUM. Articles written by distinguished English teachers have changed my style of teaching. For one thing, I had not before used games in my English classes. I didn't know that they could make students learn better than the usual, routine activities. Through these games the students learn not by force and harshness, but by what engages their minds, so that the teacher is better able to discover the peculiar bent of each student's genius.

Classroom discipline is always of first importance and must be established at the outset. Discipline, as I understand it, is not harsh, dictatorial impositions on the students, as if they were mere robots. Neither is it a deathlike silence. It is a natural outcome of controlled behavior conducive to pleasant learning in and out of the classroom. Discipline with love and concern is well known to be a necessary trait for a teacher. It is, along with teaching accurately, thoroughly, and earnestly, one of the secrets of a teacher's success.

TAN CHOR WHYE, Head of the English Department, Kedah Secondary Science School, and teacher of scientific English to matriculation students at Universiti Sains Malaysia: An English-language teacher must have endless patience and the right attitude. His greatest reward lies in the visible progress of his students. It is gratifying to note that with a command of English the learner gains access to an inexhaustible source of knowledge, both technical and literary.

In teaching English, I dislike following a prescriptive syllabus and preparing students for a public examination. Once the goal is passing the examination, much of the fun and joy of learning and teaching the language is lost. There are a lot of language games and language-enrichment activities which help learners to acquire the language in a natural and enjoyable way. However, they may not enable the learners to score the highest mark on a public examination.

There has been a considerable change in my approach to teaching English. When I was trained to be a teacher, I was made to feel that there were fixed, orthodox, and authentic ways of teaching various language skills. Now I believe there is no such thing at all. The best method of teaching is one in which learners enjoy the learning experience and actually acquire the desired language skills.

To new teachers of English I wish a most rewarding teaching career. Please don't get discouraged when learners fail to respond. The fact is that every learner has the capacity to learn. As teachers, we should be resourceful and willing to explore and change our teaching strategy to suit the needs of a particular group of learners.

JENNIFER ELLIOTT DE RIVEROL, The British Institute, Valencia, Spain: If I were to sum up why I enjoy teaching English, uppermost on my list would have to be that teaching helps to give one such an insight into human nature, and, as teachers, we have to be sensitive to the needs of our learners and understand how we can help to create a healthy learning atmosphere. It never ceases to amaze me that what makes one set of individuals communicate and learn effectively can be a disaster for another group, even though the methods used and the levels are the same.

I find that if the learners feel relaxed and can look upon the teacher as a friend and guide rather than simply as "the teacher," everyone feels happier and more receptive to learning. Each student must feel that he is needed and is an essential cog in the machinery of the classroom. By showing an interest in the students as individuals, in their likes and dislikes, and in their life in general, and by allowing them to be inquisitive about their teacher, an atmosphere of friendliness and interest is encouraged. The effective teacher should be able to adapt to varying circumstances; if the learners are feeling particularly tired, bored, or amused, these feelings can be used constructively and the teacher can remold the lesson plan—or he may find himself fighting a losing battle. It goes without saying that if we are dealing with human beings, then we, as teachers, must be "humane." A teacher must learn to know himself before he can hope to know others—we must not be afraid to laugh at ourselves.

KÉBA TOURE, Lycée Gaston Berger, Kaolack, Senegal: A teacher contributes a great deal to the shaping of tomorrow's world by providing his students with a tool that not only broadens their knowledge but also enables them to communicate and make new friends, and develops in them new ways of thinking that lead to a better understanding among peoples around the world. As an English teacher, I am trying hard to keep away from the beaten path in order that my students may get really involved in my teaching, use only English in their English classes, and express themselves as freely as possible. To that end I always put them at ease, telling them quite frankly as a kickoff to the school year that I am not a native speaker of English and that they need not be ashamed nor afraid of making mistakes, since if they knew as much English as their teacher they would not be taking courses from him. Then I usually save five minutes at the end of each class for discussion about what they have gotten from my lesson and what they would like to learn.

When I first taught, I concentrated on the vocabulary in the book, but I soon discovered that my students needed active vocabulary, words relevant to their environment, their everyday activities, tools they could use daily to communicate. Then I could involve the students in explaining vocabulary words, or I would have them talk about their experiences in conversation classes.

Teaching is a give-and-take process. We have a lot to learn from our students. A teacher should never be a smart aleck: he must be modest and open to discussion.

My advice to new teachers: (1) Be patient, kind, and frank with your students. A teacher must like his/her students and the subject he/she teaches. (2) Carefully plan your lessons, and read a lot in order to increase your knowledge and gain a better command of your subject. That will earn you respect from your students. (3) Be punctual, master your nerves, respect yourself and your students. (4) Do not shame your students nor "talk too wise"; have a sense of humor and an ability to do match-stick drawings. Thus your students will not get sick of you. They will learn in relaxed circumstances and will always look forward to welcoming you again.

HASSAN ABUL GASIM AHMED, Khartoum North Secondary School—Boys, Sudan: "One should respect his teacher more than his father . . . ." Elghazali. Perhaps a teacher is the only person who has the opportunity to make close contact with people at an age when they are forming their first impressions about life. That is why relationships made at this stage are never forgotten. Perhaps that is why I have chosen this profession. When I became a teacher, I did not expect to stay in this profession long, but after a while I became totally absorbed in my work and I began to feel pleasure in it, so that it has become not only my profession but my hobby as well. Really, it is the most honest occupation, and when you meet your ex-students later at the university or some other important place, they respect you, and you feel strangely proud that you have done something worthwhile. And really you have: you have had a part in developing humanity, however small that part may be.

MASAHARU MORINAGA, Hokkaido University of Education at Asahikawa, Japan: The purposes for learning and teaching English differ from person to person, but I would like to believe that there is one common purpose for all: to provide a means of communication in its real sense. Yes, English is now playing and will continue to play an important role as the international auxiliary language for people around the world to promote friendship, mutual understanding, and cooperation to establish really firm world peace. The language alone, however, cannot do anything. What is more important is the thinking and feeling of the person who uses it. So we must learn and teach not only how to listen to, speak, read, and write the English language itself, but also how to cultivate a kind of thoughtful attitude toward various peoples around the world.

This is a very difficult task and will take a long time, but it is worth doing well. So let us begin. Let us exchange ideas and information with one another through such magazines as the English Teaching Forum and through our own correspondence. At present only three class hours a week are devoted to the teaching of English in Japanese junior high schools, and English is still an elective subject. Many teachers of English feel that this is not enough to meet the needs of the future world situation, and we look to our colleagues for encouragement. I hope the day will soon come when more and more people can come and go freely in the spirit of "good-will ambassadors."

We are given for the coming century, as UNESCO has announced, promising young students. Our duty is to educate them to grow up to be healthy, brave, and wise crews of spaceship EARTH. Let us do our best to that end!

Along with our appreciation to the authors of the essays printed above, and to all others whose papers we have received or will receive, we add special thanks for the excellent contributions from the following readers: Marlene de Oliveira Araujo, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil; C. Bandyopadhyay, Kharagpur, West Bengal, India; Dasarathi Biswas, West Bengal, India; Sisir Kumar Bose, Birbhum, West Bengal, India; Gotz Burghardt, Zedtlitz, German Democratic Republic; Ajoy Kumar Chakraborty, Howrah, West Bengal, India; Rabindranath Chattopadhyay, Calcutta, India; Peter F. Chesami, Foumban, Cameroon; P. Cloots, Londerzeel, Belgium; Lina Cruz, Torres Novas, Portugal; Nilima Das, Almora, U.P., India; Pesenti Barili Maria Giuseppina, Bergamo, Italy; Francisco Gomes de Matos, Recife, Pernambuco, Brazil; Abdel Bagi Mohamed Hunein, Omdurman, Sudan; Saleha Bilal Husain, Karachi, Pakistan; Paul Jean, Arlon, Belgium; Aquiel Ahmad Khan, Riyadh, Saudi Arabia; Panayiotis N. Kokkinelis, Nicosia, Cyprus; Terence Krigas, Athens, Greece; K. Vijaya Kumar, Vijayawada, Andhra Pradesh, India; N. McBeath, Muscat, Oman; Yash Pal Mehta, Panjab, India; U. Mitra, Punakha, Bhutan; Shrikant Sadashiv More, Ahmednagar, India; Fathi Neifar, Sfax, Tunisia; Maria Posarelli, Livorno, Italy; Terry G. Lacy, Reykjavik, Iceland; Raj Rao, Bombay, India; Noriko Saka, Kanazawa, Ishikawa, Japan; Marianne Schuftan, San Pedro Sula, Honduras; Galizio Sciartilli, Lanciano, Italy; Mirja Sinkkonen, Parikkala, Finland; Maria Tarantino, Bari, Italy; Iole Vitti, Poços de Caldas, M.G., Brazil; A.K. Wadhwa, Pathankot, India; V.V. Yardi, Aurangabad, India; J. Zamorano C., Santiago, Chile.

FORUM NEWS & IDEAS

BRAZIL

The Absurd in Teaching Literature to EFL Students

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Teaching English literature to non-English-speaking university students is not always an easy task. In some cases, it is itself a situation taken from the absurd, in which the students are supposed to read books in a language they hardly understand, and then discuss structure, the author's style, etc. Under such circumstances, it may be absurd to believe that the students are learning anything of significance!

The idea of teaching the Theater of the Absurd came as a response to this situation, and grew out of my desire to have the students deal with originals in a first course, use the language creatively, improve their language level, loose themselves from the claws of the dictionary, respond positively to the subject—and learn some literature. In addition, contemporary literature has been considered most appropriate at initial stages.[1] It will be very difficult for students to approach Chaucer or Shakespeare if they are terrified of literature and consider it a dragon keeping them from graduation.

I experimented with a course on the Theater of the Absurd in a class of fifteen students at a private college in Rio de Janeiro. Their English level was post-intermediate. The average age was twenty-one, and the students were from middle-class backgrounds. They were all women except for one young man. We had a full semester schedule, August 1st to November 31st, with two sessions of ninety minutes each per week.

The course was structured in five stages: (1) introducing theory and reading the plays, (2) creative writing, (3) performance exercises, (4) playwriting, and (5) producing and performing students' plays.

First stage: introducing theory and reading the plays

In the first class, I presented an outline of the course, setting schedules, distributing the reading list—which included Samuel Beckett's *Waiting for Godot,* Edward Albee's *Zoo Story* and *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf,* and four plays by Harold Pinter (*The Birthday Party, The Room, The Caretaker, The Basement*). It also set dates requiring the students to read about two plays a month.

Sonia Zyngier teaches English literature at the Centro Unificado Profissional in Rio de Janeiro and lectures on methodology and English literature at national congresses for Brazilian teachers, held annually. She has also taught English at the secondary school level and has organized courses in English for specific purposes. Mrs. Zyngier holds an M.A. degree in English literature from the University of Liverpool.

Plays are always a good choice for beginners. They can be rather short, compact, and emotionally involving. The student can also be guided into visualizing the play as he reads the text, into imagining how a character would say a certain line. Thus, he can have a sense of participation. He should also be encouraged to read the play at one sitting as if he were at an actual performance. The teacher should make strong demands on the students' imaginations, lest much of the impact of the play be lost.

During the second and third sessions, while the students were reading as homework the course textbook[2] and their first play (*Godot*), we discussed in class the characteristics of the twentieth century and the conditions that led to the development of the Theater of the Absurd. Albert Camus's interpretation of the myth of Sisyphus was also discussed.[3] Students were asked to bring their own contributions to class—newspaper clippings, articles, photographs, or any other material that they felt characterized the twentieth century. They presented their material and explained it to the class. After this exercise, they were able to communicate better, feel more at ease, and exchange ideas about the world they live in. Gradually they were led to a feeling of depression, insecurity, and hopelessness, in "an effort to make man aware of the ultimate realities of his condition, to instil in him again the lost sense of cosmic wonder and primeval anguish, to shock him out of an existence that has become trite, mechanical, complacent, and deprived of the dignity that comes of awareness."[4] The discussions were directed toward leading the students into this awareness of what is purposeless and absurd in their existence.

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[1] Albert H. Marckwardt, "What Literature to Teach: Principles of Selection and Class Treatment," in *English Teaching Forum, 19,* 1 (January 1981), pp. 2–7.

[2] Martin Esslin, *The Theatre of the Absurd* (London: Penguin Books, 1968). The students were allowed to read this book in a Portuguese translation if they felt it was necessary.

[3] Albert Camus, *Le Mythe de Sisyphe* (Paris: Editions Gallimard, 1942).

In the fourth session, dedicated to the study of *Waiting for Godot*, the students were exposed to an actual experience of frustrated expectation. As I entered the classroom, I told them I had something very important to say, but would only tell them later on. I kept reminding them of it, and at the end of the class I "forgot" to tell them. When asked, I promised to do it in the following class, and obviously "forgot" again, and again, until they understood what I meant by waiting for something that never came. And this experience was integrated into their awareness of the play.

Second stage: doing creative writing

At the beginning of October, I began to devote the last ten minutes of each class to creative writing.

In accord with Esslin's statement that the "Theater of the Absurd presents the fruits of one man's descent into the depths of his personality, his dreams, fantasies, and nightmares,"[5] the students were encouraged to produce material from their own insights.

The first exercise consisted of word association. The teacher would say a word, such as *blue*, and the students would immediately write down a chain of words that popped into their minds. If a student was willing, we would read his associations and trace the different trains of thought.

A second exercise consisted of writing down dreams, trying to jot down ideas and images as soon as the students woke up, rather than writing logical compositions. It is true that translating into words a process that takes place in the mind is arbitrary and blocks most of the process. Nevertheless, it is a device for imposing a special logic, different from traditional logic. This exercise, obviously, was done as homework.

The students were also encouraged to write down dialogues overheard on buses and in the streets (when American tourists could be found), and then read them aloud in English in class. The students would discuss the irrationality of trivial expressions such as *How are you?* when one would be shocked if the person addressed started to tell the inquirer how he really was. Or *Nice to meet you*, when one cannot be sure whether it will be really nice to have met that person. Another idea was to visualize idiomatic expressions, taking each word literally. Thus, expressions such as ***give me a hand*** or ***raining cats and dogs*** would turn into a sort of Monty Python sketch.

At the end of these exercises, the students were critical of the emptiness or ambiguity of language, without having had to listen to long lectures. They had gone through a process of sensitization.

Third stage: performing exercises

By the end of September, we were well acquainted, and there was little embarrassment left. The time had come for performance. However, performing exercises may be very difficult for a teacher who does not feel at ease acting in a classroom. Some teachers are shyer than others and just cannot sing and dance, however much they are told that these are useful activities. As I would include myself in this category, I invited a drama teacher to help out by performing sketches on everyday situations: (at the bus stop, at the dentist's, queuing up for something, etc.). It was mandatory that the students *feel* the situations rather than simply being told about them. The sketches were performed without words at first; later a short dialogue (in English) was introduced. These activities took place in the classroom.

Fourth stage: playwriting

By the end of October, after the students had written their midterm paper on theory and Beckett's, Pinter's, and Albee's techniques, one of the students' dreams was selected and each one had to write a dialogue based on this dream. The best dialogue was selected, and, already in control of some of the principles of the Theater of the Absurd, the students improvised a sketch based on that dialogue. Three students who had been reluctant to perform were asked to observe the sketch and write down the parts they considered most relevant. Some passages from the dialogue were repeated, but others were created on the spot. All communication was in English, and the students even started to speak English among themselves outside of class.

The three sets of notes taken during the performance of the sketch were distributed in the following class, and the students had about fifteen minutes to write out a new dialogue. The most dramatically effective one was considered the final text.

Fifth stage: producing and performing the final play

The time came for the students to define roles: who was to be the director, the producer, the program writer (who also acted as stage manager), the leader of the discussion, and, of course, the players. The staging of the play was a sort of crowning of the end of the course. The students were so enthusiastic that they came during off-hours to rehearse. There was almost no need to memorize parts, since the students had conceived and worked on the text together. Even if they skipped a word, they knew how to control the situation. The guidelines and intention of the play had been completely absorbed.

At the end, they put on two sketches of about ten minutes each and led a discussion with the audience for about twenty minutes, during which they explained what the Theater of the Absurd was about and analyzed their own play.

Testing

Such a course can be very slippery when it comes to grading, which might represent a stumbling-block that could break the empathy. However, if a teacher has to assign grades, he should do it carefully. I believe that a grade on a written midterm paper on theory, the twentieth-century background, and the plays, a second grade for the student's participation, and a third one for his work in the final performance are enough to provide a judgment on the student's proficiency.

Conclusion

To evaluate the course by discussing the quality of the sketches produced or the acting and staging would not provide a fair assessment.

The course was successful in several respects. It enabled the students to improve their written and oral English. It also helped them to relax when communicating in a foreign language. They understood principles by practicing them and developed a critical attitude toward cultural habits. And, perhaps most importantly, they read *with pleasure* six plays that they will never forget.

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[4] Esslin, op. cit., p. 390.

[5] Esslin op. cit., p. 392.

ITALY

Don't Say *Always* and *Never*

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When I was freshly graduated in English language and literature, I was awarded a scholarship by the British Council to attend a course for young teachers at the University of Newcastle-upon-Tyne. Some of the lectures were given by Professor A.S. Hornby, who often repeated this statement: "Don't give rules. Say: There's a tendency in English to. . . ." As I had been taught to use strict rules, I was astonished at that assertion, and was cautious about believing it. It took me years to become fully convinced of its validity.

This article was presented orally at the second national convention of the Association of Teachers of English to speakers of Italian in Rome, November 8–9, 1980, under a different title.

Fictitious distinctions

Some years later, I attended a seminar in Rome, which was concerned with the possibility of producing a new English textbook for Italian students. I was impressed by Professor Robert A. Hall, Jr., and the case he made against a fictitious correctness. His opinions on this subject are clearly stated in his book *Leave Your Language Alone*, from which I quote the following passage:

> Many other "grammar rules," although not derived from Latin grammar, are still quite inaccurate and unfounded: the best example of this is the "shall" and "will" rules that we are taught with regard to the future of English verbs. Most of us can never remember those rules, and are always uneasy about whether we are or are not making a mistake in their application: is it *I shall go* or *I will go, he should go* or *he would go?* We have been told that there is some difference in the meaning of each member of these pairs, that one of them indicates "determination" and the other "simple futurity"—but which? It is no wonder that we can't remember—because such a distinction does not really exist: in normal speech we would usually say *I'll go, he'd go, we'll go*. Even with the full forms, there is no distinction in meaning, except the artificial distinction that we may have been taught to make. Where did the grammar books get this rule? A seventeenth-century English grammarian, one John Wallis, sitting in his study, dreamed the rule up, manufactured it out of whole cloth, and put it in his book; and later grammarians have copied and recopied it, each from his predecessor. Its relation to the facts of the English language is completely null, and its origin classifies it among works of fiction rather than of science.

During that same period, I frequently met an English school inspector, to whom I mentioned my new notions about English grammar. When I told him about the passage on the future tense, he strongly disagreed, but a few minutes later, when his attention was not focused on the problem, he said: "I will" when the rules would have required "I shall." He was more open-minded about other problems, such as the use of the article *the*, and of *some* and *any*, about which he said, "You can always argue"—meaning that you can always maintain your point of view. All this led me to listen to English with a new ear and to read it with a new eye.

I will give here only a few examples from the abundant material that I have collected over the years.

Some fading distinctions in verb forms

One of the problems that troubles teachers and learners is the use of *have* in the interrogative and negative forms, other than *have you?* and *I have not*. The following query appeared in *English Language Teaching:* "Is there a difference of usage between *have* or *have got* and *do have*, denoting possession or something similar?" The answer was: ". . . There are some British people who have adopted the American usage, which seems to be spreading in Britain. Nowadays one can hear:

Do you have a pencil sharpener?
Do you have the time on you?
Does he have a ticket?"

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Consider now some comments on the use of *was* instead of *were:* "This is not an easy question. You will certainly hear *I wish I was* and *I wish I were* in England today, the former familiar and informal, the latter elegant and formal" (*English Language Teaching*). "The tendency seems to be to use *was* in familiar speech and *were* in more ceremonious or formal speech" (Palmer and Blandford, *A Grammar of Spoken English*). "Notice that *were* can replace *was* even though the subject of the verb is in the first or third person singular (*sic*): e.g.,

'If I *was* (*were*) a bird'
'If it *was* (*were*) snowing'
'I wish John *was* (*were*) living with us' " (L.A. Hill, *An Advanced Refresher Course*).

A question about the progressive form appeared in another issue of *English Language Teaching*, from a reader who had heard two speakers saying: "This news is coming to you from Washington" and "This news broadcast comes to you from the BBC." He or she had also read: "The earth . . . is whirling in an oval path . . . and as it whirls. . . ." Here is the answer: "Many careful observers have tried to define conditions for choice between Simple and Progressive, and their lack of success does not suggest we are likely to find any easy practical rules for learners. For every one occurrence of a progressive form there are twenty or more occurrences of a simple tense form. . . ." This opinion is reinforced by Simon Potter, who, in *Changes in Present-day English*, writes: "The difference between simple and expanded (TO BE + gerund) forms are no longer strictly observed." And, in another passage: "You were probably taught in your grammar lessons that verbs expressing mental states and activities have no expanded forms at all. Nevertheless, we now hear and read many expressions that no longer conform to this rule." Evidently he refers to expressions like these:

We are hoping
I shall be seeing him
You're not feeling ill
etc.

A few miscellaneous problems

I know that some teachers would object to phrases like the following:

The magazine's writer (*The Sunday Times*)
One of the river's biggest islands (*Daily American*)
The car's roof (*Daily American*)
The earth's shadow (A.S. Hornby, E.V. Gatenby, H. Wakefield, *The Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*)

because the possessive case is used with inanimate objects. They would also object to:

A clearance of two feet (Hornby)
Two days of talks

where, on the contrary, one would expect the possessive case with expressions of time or measure.

It is generally believed that adverbs of frequency have a fixed place in sentences, certainly not the one used by the following writers:

I say always (T. Carlyle)
Cruelty . . . revolted him always. (G.K. Chesterton)
The prairie drifts always westward. (S. Lewis)
Popé used to come often. (A. Huxley)
They never are. . . . (O. Wilde)[1]

Note what H.W. Fowler, in *A Dictionary of Modern Usage*, says about the use of *that* and *which*: "What grammarians say should be has perhaps less influence on what shall be than even the more modest of them realize; usage evolves itself little disturbed by their likes and dislikes." And, from another source: "The great mass of people using *that* and *which* indiscriminately makes them both right (except after a preposition)." Fowler again, about making a distinction between defining and non-defining relatives: ". . . But it would be idle to pretend that it is the practice either of most or of the best writers."

There are also cases of *who* instead of *whom*, and of *which* used for persons:

It was Manzoni which . . .
It is the individuals which are dangerous.

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[1] EDITOR'S NOTE: These phrases and sentences from English and American literature differ from most of the examples given in this article in that they are *purposeful* deviations from the more common word order, made by *master craftsmen* of the language to produce *a desired effect*—an effect that cannot be fully appreciated by any reader in whom has not been inculcated the usual, everyday placement of the adverb. They provide excellent illustrations of this device, and may be useful for students at the higher levels of proficiency in English.

Observe the following examples, and you will become doubtful about the rule that tells us not to use the future after temporal conjunctions:

> Before I shall have become quite a man again I shall . . .
>
> The day will come when we will have a woman President.
>
> I'll be darned if I'll let you ride me anymore.

Everyone has learned that *tell* is never used with the actual words spoken (W. Stannard Allen, *Living English Structure*). But what about the following sentences?[2]

> "I am going over to the majority," he told a friend, "and you know I have always preferred the minority." (*Newsweek*)
>
> "It reminds me of a lower-caste Community Song," she told Bernard. (A. Huxley, *Brave New World*)

Another questionable problem is the use of *more* and *most* or of the suffixes *-er, -est* in comparatives and superlatives. Potter states: "Today the analytic forms with *more* and *most* are clearly gaining ground over the synthetic forms in *-er* and *-est*." I remember a cartoon in which Dennis the Menace had broken a Greek vase, and when his mother entered the room he exclaimed: "If you can't say something nice, don't say anything at all." What do you think of that *something?* Isn't it contrary to a rule that we learned?

A last example, and then I will stop. Making comments on expressions of duration, Alfred S. West declares: "It often happens, however, that the continuous character of the action need not be emphasized, and in such cases either the Perfect or the Perfect Continuous Tense may be used: *I have waited a week for* or *I have been waiting* . . ." (Alfred S. West, *The Revised English Grammar*).

As I said before, these are only a few examples; an exhaustive list would be impossible. It is up to teachers to form the habit, in reading and listening, to discover structures, expressions, and usage that do not conform to the rules that we have been taught. And it would be good practice "to be cautious about using the words *always* and *never* when presenting a grammatical generalization, especially if the students are fairly advanced in their study of the language," as recommended by the Editor of the FORUM in the April 1979 issue of this journal.

POLAND

Second Language Problems and Teaching Literature

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EWA CHRZANOWSKA-KARPIŃSKA
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Colleges . . . have their indispensable office,—to teach elements. But they can only highly serve us when they aim not to drill, but to create . . . —R.W. Emerson, *The American Scholar*

At Polish universities, the accepted practice in English departments is to use English as the medium of instruction and communication. Students' proficiency is carefully tested before they are admitted to the university, since after four years' study they are expected to write an M.A. thesis in a second language. Because some fluency is assumed, the existing programs in English departments emphasize course content rather than language learning—concurrent classes in practical English are held to exercise and develop linguistic skills. But many students—some with a strong command of the basics—are still inhibited when English is required to express academic knowledge.

Specifically, as teachers of English literature to Polish students, we felt that students were not using English in literature class as well as they should. The nature of literary classes demands from students both an emotional and creative attitude towards language. Too often, for our students, spontaneity of expression was overshadowed by linguistic performance problems. As teachers, we were faced with the double task of finding a technique that would diminish the students' feeling of linguistic incompetence and, at the same time, stimulate them to personal expression on a more sophisticated level. In pursuit of this goal, we tried to integrate the teaching of literature and the group-work technique, our interest being mainly its therapeutic function. We turned, for our underpinnings, to psychology and the theories of group dynamics. In this article, we will describe this experiment—how we attempted to reinforce students' motivation and active attitudes in second-language literary studies. We call our technique "interpersonal training." Our observations could be helpful for teachers of literature, and for those involved in advanced conversation classes where creative thinking in English is a direct educational objective.

The initial situation

In our university, students are most often divided into groups of sixteen and have two hours of literary classes per week. Before class, they are expected to prepare the assigned readings and gain some background information concerning a given author and his time. In the traditional classroom situation, the teacher examines his students' knowledge by means of questions to which correct answers are expected. Using this question-and-answer procedure, he tries to stimulate a discussion, the purpose being a stock of ready-made conclusions, which are then memorized and rattled off by students at their exams. An overload of academic knowledge and time restrictions block the teacher's initiative, and he can only convey petrified portions of literary material.

In this situation, students tend to feel they must satisfy the teacher with accepted contributions and not engage in a dialogue where individual opinions and views are discussed. Some students are afraid they will not be able to say exactly what they think. In the case of a second language, the problem is more complicated. There is a tendency for the student to take the line of least resistance answering rote questions and, instead of thinking, to use, in turn, stock phrases he has memorized. Many times, only two or three students in a group are ready to cooperate and take part in mature discussions. These particular students have no fear of using the language, are emotionally involved in the discussed problems, and wish to freely speak their minds—the remaining students are not responsive and stay passive. Even if called on by the teacher, they avoid direct presentation of their personal opinions and use stereotyped statements borrowed from their handbooks. The phrase "Critics say" is these students' favorite provision against creative thinking. For some students, then, literary knowledge is simply a collection of facts, and, apart from mechanical answers, they cannot be provoked to express individual thoughts and ideas.

Analysis

Facing this situation, we thought it necessary to find a therapy that would effect changes in classroom behavior, hopefully creating an atmosphere of confidence and mutual involvement. We had to change our technique if we were to achieve our educational goals. Before we decided to put into practice our so-called "interpersonal training," we had subjected the initial situation to a sort of behavioral analysis—an attempt to identify power relationships and their effect on the teacher's actions and the learning environment of students. This led to the following observations:

1. The artificial classroom situation is a stress situation in itself, and the use of a second language creates added stress. Students feel it unnatural and almost a "disguise" to express their thoughts and reflections through a second language, in which the emotional

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[2] EDITOR'S NOTE: We were surprised to see that "everyone has learned that *tell* is never used with the actual words spoken," since we had never heard this "rule," nor had any of our colleagues that we checked with. Not having convenient access to the source the author mentions, we can only assume that it may have been stated in order to create a simple, neat distinction—probably between *tell* and *say*—which does not accord generally with native speakers' use of these words.

subtleties can never be fully perceived.

2. In the "traditional" classroom situation, the teacher is privileged and powerful. He directs all the classroom activities by choosing the topic and leading the discussion. He asks questions and demands correct answers. His means of "repression" and reward are bad grades and passes. The teacher himself is coerced by his responsibilities towards the teaching program, and this pressure is then transferred to the group.

3. In this environment, teacher-student polarization is very strong. It alienates the teacher and puts him in the position of an intruder from the outside. There is an element of aggression in the stimuli he gives to make the group work. Hence, the students' first response is usually silence.

4. Distribution of tensions in this traditional, formal teacher-student relationship is one-sided. Students are defensive rather than actively involved. They work under coercion and often tend to escape into passivity and introversion. Greater tension is evoked by students' doubts about their individual abilities—they may be afraid of becoming objects of ridicule for their ignorance. We can mention cases of neurotic reactions of the students directly addressed by the teacher.

The experiment

The main goal of our experiment was to minimize the teacher's dominating role. The students were given a chance to develop their initiative and—within acceptable limits—affect the program itself. Another important goal was to change the character of classroom discussion—to create a forum for the exchange of genuine thoughts. The former distribution of tensions had to be destroyed for the sake of more democratic interactions. We wished to see the teacher become integrated with the group and take on the role of a mediator, and the tension between the teacher and the group transformed into a more constructive force involving friendly competition and rivalry among students.

Though we didn't wish to encourage ignorant self-expression, we decided to allow the students to suggest even far-fetched ideas. We also encouraged them to frankly admit it when they didn't understand. They were thus invited by the teacher to share a part of his responsibility.

The experiment itself

The student group divided itself into four subgroups which were, in turn, to play the role of "experts" on the subjects discussed during the following meetings. Before arranging the schedule, the whole class was provided with a detailed list of topics and readings to be distributed among the four "expert" subgroups. Thus, the material to be covered during a given semester was seen to have been equally divided among the students. Each performance of one of the "expert" subgroups required individual preparation, including working with the teacher before the actual class. We found that there were a minimum of two such meetings necessary for the proper preparation of the class. The first was devoted to the formulation of the most essential discussion problems and to suggestions concerning bibliography. The second consultation meeting was for clarification and classification of the students' suggestions and doubts.

When their turn to conduct a given class came, the student "experts" replaced the teacher and introduced their topic to the rest of their peers. The teacher was supposed to stay apart and to control the course of action, intervening only if and when the students found themselves at a loss. The "experts" were not only to answer all potential questions on the discussed subject, but were to suggest and develop their own points for discussion. The shy ones among them were thus given "authority" to support them, and their motivation grew as they were responsible for the success of the class. Within this experiment, "non-expert" students felt freer to ask questions addressed to their fellow students, and thus they gradually developed courage. They were not so eager to accept words at their face value. In the last resort, they would turn to the teacher to mediate their disagreements, but in this case the authority of the teacher was confronted only after they had formulated their own standpoints.

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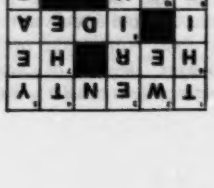

solution to crossword puzzle

Emotions and rivalry grew, and sometimes the more involved students caught themselves shouting. The situation in the class permitted them to use their second language with genuine feeling and emotion. When the subject was exhausted, the "experts" tried to sum up the discussion and draw the final conclusions. We found that when initially the subgroups of student "experts" relied on the teacher's advice in the choice of problems, they gradually felt more eager to bring their own suggestions to the discussions. After each class, the "experts" proposed to reward those students who actively helped them during the discussion.

Pros and cons

The experiment fulfilled its therapeutic function by creating a good social climate in the class. In this new learning environment, the students were stimulated to use their second language creatively in a natural way. Instead of generalizing, they tended to discuss literature in terms of their personal feelings, and to become involved in many-sided interactions with one another. As we expected, the aggressive force did turn into positive rivalry which enlivened the class itself. The students were inspired to self-improvement, as they now wished to gain the social approval of the group and to enjoy the respect of their peers. In addition, their sense of responsibility for their intellectual development grew, step by step. By relinquishing the authoritarian classroom grading system, the teacher invited students to develop their own powers of objective evaluation.

The experiment did create a potential problem: when students were inclined to discuss a minor problem at length, there was no time to discuss more essential points which were perhaps not as interesting to them. It was sometimes necessary for the teacher to redirect the course of the class by stating firmly that a particular topic should be left for students' private discussion or another meeting. We acknowledge that, in the above classroom situation, not every literary point would be made, because of the students' lack of experience—however, this should be weighed against the advantages of the method.

There is also a danger in this situation, where the students themselves control the discussions, that both the teacher and the student "experts" may not foresee all possible questions, and the competence of the teacher might be unfairly questioned. Finally, we will admit that this type of group-work technique is time-consuming for the teacher, as extra time is devoted to coaching student "experts." But the advantages and personal satisfaction for both teacher and student using such a technique must be seen to be fully understood.

ROMANIA

Wanted: Ad Writers!

GABRIELLA GHEORGHIU

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A few years ago, so-called "industrial secondary schools" were established in our country. The purpose of these schools is to help students find their way in life under a variety of circumstances, to enable them to have a job even if they are at some time unable to work at the job they have prepared themselves for after they graduate from high school.

As the name suggests, these schools prepare the students for different branches of industry. Although they still need a foreign language for documentation, the foreign-language classes meet only once a week, and that single hour is usually not enough. To make matters worse, the students don't attend their classes every week, since they are required to spend certain weeks in a factory, to familiarize themselves with it and with their possible future work.

I believe that frequency of class sessions is important in foreign-language study if you are serious about teaching or learning the language. Therefore, under the given circumstances, when I taught in an industrial secondary school during all of the last school year, I had to work out a new method.

My search for a useful approach

I was looking for something that would appeal to my students and that would, if possible, persuade them to work at their English even during those weeks that they were supposed to spend in the factory. I wanted to find a way to get them to exchange ideas, to question each other—in short, to keep their minds busy with English.

I asked them what they liked to do in their spare time, especially after long, tiring hours at work. They mentioned a number of things, among which were reading books and watching TV, but I still didn't have what I wanted. Then one day I brought to class a magazine written in English, in order to try to discover the level of their knowledge of English. As the students came from different parts of the country, there were as many different levels as there were students. (Another reality to face!) As they leafed through the magazine, the students were attracted—almost all of them—by the advertisements.

A possible solution

They began to ask me what certain words meant. Telling them the meaning of the words wasn't always enough to enable them to understand the meaning of the text, so I had to explain the grammatical forms and give some other examples, in sentences. I recognized that that could be one way of working with these students, but there was only one magazine, and not all the students could see it at the same time. Therefore, I had no way of knowing how well the group as a whole understood an item, nor could I teach them in any comprehensive way. Also, I felt it would be more useful for the students to do something that would require a greater creative effort of their own. I felt that I must give the students something that would both attract them and involve them in working at something interesting. Let the students make up advertisements!

The students responded to my proposal with enthusiasm. I was happy about it, too, for I thought I had found a good solution. But the teacher must always be prepared for surprises, and not altogether pleasant ones. The next time the class met, only a few students had brought the two advertisements they had been asked to make. The others, when asked why they hadn't done it, answered that they didn't know how. They wondered how the few who had brought them had succeeded in doing theirs.

Knowing that we had read, translated, and discussed several good ads during the previous classes, I was determined to find out the real reason. And I did. They thought their ads wouldn't be as good as the ones in the magazines; hence they feared they would be ridiculed and laughed at by their fellows. I later discovered that, for the same reason, even those who had made up ads wouldn't show them in class, preferring to pretend they hadn't done them.

Getting down to work

That was when I realized that I had to start some other way. First I tried to get the students to define "advertisements." They gave different definitions, which I accepted only in part. I then tried to lead them to the dictionary definition: "Advertisement: a public notice, usually paid for."

But that was not enough for my students. I wanted to teach them how to get at the heart of it, how to find out what was striking, important, and interesting about the thing they wanted to "advertise." They also had to learn how to concentrate many facts into short, explicit, inviting, and convincing sentences. This was the ideal; what I got were ads written by students who kept learning English, and that's what I appreciated in their papers. For me, they were opportunities to find out what my students didn't know and to correct their mistakes.

I collected the ads, took them home, corrected them, and noted the grammatical problems that I would discuss at the next session of the class. Among the problems that showed up were: degrees of comparison of short adjectives (*easy:easier*), how to use prepositions, the correct construction of the present progressive tense, use of the definite article, correct use of modals, certain co-occurrences, rules of punctuation and capitalization, irregular plurals, uncountable nouns, etc.

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Problems and possibilities

At the beginning, the boys tried to advertise cigarettes and drinks, especially foreign ones. At first I got angry; the teacher was revolted. Fortunately I was at home alone, so the students didn't see this. I had to be tactful! Of course, my students were at an age when such things are a temptation, especially because they are forbidden, or at least not accepted by their parents or grown-up authority. In the next class I tried to explain to the students how small the area of cigarettes and drinks is, how many professional ads have already been written for those items, and that they had to "explore new fields" in order to provide themselves with an opportunity to enrich their vocabulary.

An ad that one of the boys wrote, about a car-repair service, provided an opportunity to teach the expression "to have something done" (to have someone else do it) as in *to have your car repaired, to have your hair cut,* etc. It also opened the way for a discussion of the modal verbs, especially *can* and *may*.

Sometimes the ads were so poorly written that everything had to be changed; in fact, the whole thing had to be rewritten. Despair is in sight sometimes, but I never give up. I am glad that a student is making the effort; writing an ad may be more difficult for him than for the others. In such a case, I praise his work to encourage him, and I don't compare it with the others.

Sometimes you have to guess what the student's message is. At the next class, when you bring the ad back, you have to ask the student what he meant. But you should be very tactful! Being seventeen also means being very sensitive when your pride is involved, especially if you are a boy in a mixed class. Sometimes a student gives up only because he feels you doubt his ability to do things right. Therefore you must not laugh at him or ridicule a mistake, and you must not allow the class to, either, except when the result is humorous, as in the following: "I love my friend because she washes herself with Palmolive. If you wish to feel good, wash with this fine soup!"

It is obvious the student meant Palmolive *soap*. We had a good laugh, but it was also the moment to explain the importance of spelling words correctly and to draw the students' attention to possible ambiguities in English.

The ad I liked the best was one my students created and used as a slogan, especially during the weeks they had to put their technical knowledge into practice in a factory. It went like this:

"Practice ads each day of the practical training!"

It was a pleasure to find that my students kept practicing their English even during the weeks they didn't have English classes, and I had to correct as many papers as during a regular week.

UNITED STATES

Preparing to Read: An Approach to Teaching Literature in the ESL Curriculum

GREGORY MCNAMEE
University of Arizona

Those familiar with the so-called "traditional" method of language teaching will remember that one of its principal aims was to provide the student with enough knowledge of grammar and vocabulary to enable him to read the literature of the second language in the original. Indeed, the study of literature is an essential feature of the traditional method. This approach to foreign-language teaching has given way, save in a few dark enclaves, to the "direct method," the "audiolingual method," and, more recently, to such approaches as Gattegno's "Silent Way," Lozanov's "Suggestopedia," and the notional-fuctional syllabus. The emphasis on the spoken over the written language that has come about is a just one; nevertheless, the study of literature, of the written language in its most refined application, is still a valid, if secondary, part of a foreign-language program.

Unfortunately, the secondary role of literature in the more modern approaches to foreign-language education has meant that literature is, in general, still taught through largely traditional tactics. The theoretical labors that have been expended on other aspects of the foreign-language curriculum have not been applied to the study of literature. In order to bring the study of literature in line with other facets of the ESL/EFL program, this theoretical gap must be filled.

The need for a bridge

The student who emerges from the practical, workaday world of the spoken-language classroom into the literature class (often referred to by some general rubric, such as "Language and Culture" or "American Civilization") is often bewildered, for he has entered an entirely new territory, one populated with symbolic representations, buried motifs, and abstractions piled upon abstractions. He has moved out of the clear light of "Mr. Miller is an accountant who lives in New York City" into the avernal darknesses of "Isaac McCaslin, 'Uncle Ike,' past seventy and nearer eighty than he ever corroborated anymore, a widower now and uncle to half a county and father to no one."[1] And he has moved there without having been provided with some sort of rheostat to gradually dim the scene and accustom his eyes to the newfound twilight.

To shift metaphors: the student in the EFL/ESL literature class needs some sort of bridge between the discourse of daily life and the discourse of literature. Save in rare cases, he is provided with none. If this is because the literature teacher assumes that the student, through first-language literary study, is already equipped to interpret literature in the second language, then let him be disabused: the days of informed general literacy are over.[2] Few students, after four years of high school or even university, are capable of adequately reading Shakespeare, Faulkner, even Salinger; many have great difficulty with the daily newspaper. And this state of affairs seems to apply to the world at large. We should probably assume, therefore, that our students are generally ignorant of any notion of literary process, of interpretive reading, and hence of the nature of literature itself. This is our starting point, the chasm over which our bridge must be built.

Abstract analysis as the crucial element

I shall not try to define *literature* in this brief article. It is enough for our purposes to remark that literature is an abstract construct that involves the interpretation of the world in a mixture of abstract and concrete terms, an interpretation via reduction of the vast array of available sensory and intangible experiences. The operative word here is *abstract:* the codification of an elusive reality that we can all sense but are hard put to define. This abstract characteristic is a fundamental aspect of all literary process.

Most students of ESL/EFL, especially at the university level, have had some training in English prose composition. They are familiar with the encoding processes of writing: the process of choosing lexical items, idioms, and grammatical structures appropriate to the writing task at hand; of establishing audience and tone; the list goes on.

Gregory McNamee has taught ESL/EFL in Mexico, where he was on the faculty of English language and literature in the American School Foundation of Guadalajara. He has also taught in Italy and at the University of Arizona, where he received his M.A. in ESL (1980) and where he has returned to teach. As well as being a teacher, he is an editor and a journalist. His special interests are in world literature and translation.

Students in the ESL/EFL composition class are familiar with all this, but are rarely called upon to exercise their talents for abstract analysis at the same time. This is, of course, rightly so, for the real stuff of ESL/EFL instruction is to increase communicative competence in direct, unadorned, and eminently concrete terms. Yet it is this gap in the students' composition training, this lack of familiarity with the processes of abstract analysis, that impedes the novice when he first confronts the literary text. If literature is, in its *process*, an exercise in abstraction, then the student of literature without some intuition of the process of abstract analysis is, obviously, inadequately prepared to read. To prepare him to read, we must start by teaching the student to develop his powers of abstract analysis in purely verbal terms.

Writing extended definitions

This preparation, I believe, is best achieved through writing, and, more specifically, through the vehicle of the extended definition of 500–1,000 words. This rhetorical strategy can be best employed as follows: the student, after having written extended definitions of easily described but nonetheless abstract terms such as *man, dog, chair*, and the like, is asked to provide extended definitions of such terms as *bravery, patriotism, love, friendship*, and *technology*. My students usually protest that these terms are impossible to define; and after some dialectical banter—sophistry—on my part, they are even more firm in this initial reaction. (Try, for example, to neatly distinguish *slave* from *prisoner*.) However, after a bit of reflection, the students have often produced interesting and thoughtful analyses of these abstract terms. These become more interesting and more thoughtful as time goes on, as students become more and more comfortable with the rigors and processes of abstract analysis. The students even like this

[1] This quotation makes up the first paragraph of William Faulkner's short story "Was," in *Go Down, Moses* (New York: Random House, 1973), p. 3.

[2] This contention forms a central aspect of the critical studies of George Steiner, with whose work all linguists and teachers of literature should have some acquaintance. I refer the reader to *Language and Silence* (New York: Atheneum, 1973) and *After Babel* (London: Oxford, 1977).

training—a satisfying event when English prose composition is the traditional bane of students, native and foreign alike.

After this sequence, the students are asked to produce short narratives employing both concrete and abstract terms; these narratives are written in the first and third persons, following the general pattern of a creative-writing syllabus. Exercises in concrete description follow, such as the time-honored Agassizan method of writing for an hour or a week on the physical attributes of some natural object, such as a coin, flower, wall, or the like.

When these steps have been completed (and more may be added—in this syllabus the sequence lasts four to six weeks, though it may be abbreviated according to the needs of the class), the students are asked to produce a final narrative employing all the strategies listed above; an example would be a narrative in the course of which a character dicovers the "meaning" of an abstract term, such as *love*. (For a somewhat tangled literary counterpart, think of the meaning Winston Smith discovers at the close of George Orwell's *1984*.) This summarizing process, once successfully completed, signals that the students are adequately prepared for the meat of the course, the interpretive reading of literature. At this point let it be noticed that there is still plenty of time in a one-semester course for such traditional discussions as "theme," "plot," "symbol," and "motif"; the difference is that the students will better comprehend those terms as seasoned veterans.

Once again, the operative word is "abstract." The student, having grappled with abstract terms for himself, is better prepared to interpret and analyze the abstract themes of which literature is made; and, having achieved this preparation by means of the relatively familiar vehicle of the English prose composition, the student has some bridge between the known and the unknown, between radically different forms of discourse. The student who has an informed, self-discovered sense of the meaning of *bravery* will be a better reader of Crane's *The Red Badge of Courage* and Hemingway's "Soldier's Home"; of *patriotism*, Benét's "The Devil and Dan'l Webster"; of *love*, Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and, with certain macabre twists, Faulkner's "A Rose For Emily."

Learning cultural values

I earlier remarked that, with our present aim in foreign-language teaching being communicative competence in the second language, the study of literature, so dear to the traditionalist, has become of secondary importance. Few ESL/EFL students, given the choice, elect to study Anglo-American literature; the aims of most are far more pragmatic. It is for the small number of ESL/EFL students who are interested in literature that this essay is written. If literature needs a defense of its place in the ESL/EFL curriculum, let it be a pragmatic defense: one of the subtle motives of ESL/EFL—or any other second-language—training is to impress in some small way Anglo-American cultural and mental patterns on the student; this is the gist of the axiomatic "learning to think in the second language." Cultural anthropologists have long recognized literature as an index of cultural values and mind sets; this is their rationale for collecting and analyzing the myths, songs, legends, and folktales of so-called primitive peoples. Anglo-American literature is no exception. It too, upon analysis, yields a fairly comprehensive picture of the general set of attitudes and cultural values of English-speaking society, be those the attitudes of the mainstream or otherwise.

By an admittedly circuitous route, the study of Anglo-American literature affords the attentive ESL/EFL student a parallel index to the values to which he has already been exposed in the audiolingual classroom, a reinforcement, in effect. This reinforcement will be doubly strong if it is achieved through the interpretive process outlined above.

A final word

In summary, I would point out that one learns only by doing, if we believe the old Confucian tenet. In taking part in the encoding processes of abstract analysis, which closely resemble those of literary process, the ESL/EFL student is in an ideal position to read and interpret the literary texts that are set before him, and he will understand them. Learning by doing. The formula is not alien to the audiolingual teacher. By extending its application to literary study, we can complete the circle of a modern, comprehensive foreign-language program. □

Teacher Correspondents

In our January issue, we agreed to set aside a small amount of space for names and addresses of readers who would like to correspond with other readers of the FORUM. *Those received in time for inclusion in this issue are printed below. Many writers have included a bit of additional information about themselves.*

I am an English instructor/teacher at IKIP Padang, an institute for teacher training. I also teach English at several universities and conduct English-by-radio programs at three radio stations.

Drs. M. Yazid Ismail, Dip.
ELTTP
English Department
FKSS IKIP Padang
West Sumatra, Indonesia

I am 26 and I teach English at a secondary school in Prague.

Věra Bosáková
Sudoměřská 25
13000 Praha 3
Czechoslovakia

I am interested in correspondence in which we can discuss literature, arts, politics, and other subjects. I'm thirty-three years old, single, and a lawyer.

João Alves
SQN 216—Bloco "J"—Apto. 307
70000—BRASILIA (DF)—Brasil

I have been teaching English for seven years to boys and girls aged eleven to fifteen at a secondary school in the southwest of France. I would like to write to teachers from English- (or Spanish-) speaking countries, with a view to exchanging pen friends' addresses for our respective pupils, also swapping paperback books, magazines, newspapers, posters. . . .

Eliane Justin
"Ricard"
Saint Sixte
47220 Astaffort

Interest: Exchanging letters and books on ELT and collecting stamps

Zhuang Liang-Yuan
c/o English Department
Beijing Teachers College
Beijing 100037
People's Republic of China

I am a young teacher engaged in teaching grammar. I would enjoy corresponding with other experienced teachers who can give me advice on teaching this subject.

Wu LiKuang
English Department
Jishou University
West Hunan
People's Republic of China

Horst Schewe
Oevern Block 9
2000 Hamburg 63
Federal Republic of Germany

I am a student at the Educational faculty in Ankara University.

Hüdayi Şafak
Eğitim Fakültesi
Ankara Üniversitesi
E.P.Ö.
Ankara
Turkey

University teacher of English

Elżbieta Krawczyk
ul. Tyszki 42/3
40-126 Katowice
Poland

Biplab Nath
Lyceum
P.O. & Vill. Hijalpukur
Dist. 24 Parganas
PIN-743271
West Bengal
India

I am a thirty-two year old teacher, teaching English at the Pedagogical Lycée and Musica Art School of my hometown, Timişoara.

Odette Ortopan
Str. Brîncoveanu 16
1900 Timişoara
R. S. Románia

I have been teaching English as a second language for the last six years at the secondary level. I want to make the best use of the best and the most skilled English teachers throughout the world by corresponding with them.

Abdul Ghafoor
Professeur d'Anglais
Lycee Mixte de Barika
W/Batna
Algeria

I'd like to be included in the list of teachers who want to correspond with other teachers.

Elvira Di Mauro
via Guercio, 112
84100 Salerno
Italy

Letters

On the Word "Audial"

The London School of English
15 Holland Park Gardens
London W14 8D2
18 December 1981

Dear Sir,

The British Council in London has drawn my attention to a footnote (inside front cover of your October 1981 issue) in which you use the word "audial," which, as you rightly point out, cannot yet be found in any dictionary.

As every invention, more or less, is made in several different places at the same time, it will not come as a surprise to you that the Arels Examinations Trust has been using this word for about fifteen years now. There are two reasons: First, when the Arels Oral Examinations were first introduced in 1967, they were very much talked about because they were (and remain) the only full-scale examinations in speaking and understanding. It proved inconvenient to mispronounce the word "aural" in order to speak it in juxtaposition with the word "oral."

The second reason is a sort of protest: it seemed very significant that this very fundamental skill of audial comprehension had been so neglected in every way that linguisticians (another new word to set off against linguists) had not even found it necessary to accord it the compliment of a distinctive word which was phonemically distinguishable from "oral."

The word "audial" is now being widely used in many parts of the world where the Arels Oral Examinations have been taken by over 50,000 foreign students of English.

Yours sincerely,
Peter A. Fabian, M.A.
Chairman
Arels Examination Trust

An Ardent Teacher's Innovations

Lyceum
P.O. + Vill. Hijalpukur
Dist. 24 Parganas
Pin. 743271
West Bengal, India
3 November 1981

Dear Editor:

I have been teaching English as a foreign language in an institution named Lyceum, situated at Habra, a town forty-five kilometers from Calcutta. Through vigorous perusal of various books on the English language, I have acquired the ability to put across my ideas in a forceful and interesting manner. The esteemed magazine ENGLISH TEACHING FORUM, of course, helps me a lot. Although Lyceum is not equipped with modern scientific accessories such as audiovisual equipment, a language laboratory, etc., I am really proud of my students, who have achieved considerable conversational fluency in English. Their ardent zeal is on the increase.

I include in my teaching some remarks on the value of language learning; the importance of English as an international language; appropriateness, economy, and clarity; and some special features of English, such as its masculinity, hybridism, etc. In my course on conversational English, I point out the difference between colloquial language and various formal and literary types of language. We discuss colloquialism and slang, formal and informal usages, idiomatic expressions of everyday use, foreign words and phrases, the use of contracted forms, question tags, puns, clichés, idioms and other turns of phrase, one- and two-word sentences, non sequiturs and all kinds of interjections and expletives, quotations, proverbs, peculiar expressions commonly used in spoken English, matters of courtesy, etiquette, and manners; conversation practice and dialogues, etc.

To help the students improve their pronunciation, I require, in addition to the classwork, a number of extracurricular activities, including educational tours, contact with native speakers, drama, debate, etc., and I encourage them to listen to the English by radio and television programs of the Voice of America and the BBC.

Students are often advised to commit to memory a list of words from the lexicon, but this memorization is a rather boring chore. Therefore, I have adopted the following, more lively, method: at the very outset I give the students a single word (say, *fun*) and ask them to make as many words as possible by changing the first letter of the given word, not by racking their brains but just playfully. This seems to be the best way to jog their memory. Next, I carefully teach them the meanings of those words they don't know; thus they learn ten words, e.g., *fun, bun, dun, gun, hun, nun, pun, run, sun, tun,* etc. Then I compose short and meaningful rhymes using those words. The students can be taught to do this, too.

I have also been following the Richard Via method of staging short dramas to improve my students' pronunciation. They have told me that it has been possible for them to pick up lots of new words by this dramatic method. It has also helped them to acquire fluency in the language.

Yours truly,
Biplab Nath

Pen Friends for Pupils

Jesi, Italy
4 February 1981

Dear Editor:

I'd like to make contact with an American teacher of a "comprehensive" school. I teach English in a comprehensive school of a small country-town. My pupils are aged 2 to 16. I am also interested in finding individual pen friends for my pupils and establishing a class or even school contact.

Cordially,
Massimo Travaglia
Via XXIV Maggio, 29bis
60035—Jesi (Ancona), Italy

A Correction

18 March 1982

Dear Mr. Malamud,

Thank you for the copies of the English Teaching Forum, which includes an article by my colleague and myself. There's one embarrassing detail, though, which I'd like to see put right. In my biodata on page 10, I'm called *Dr.* Laufer. It also says I received my "doctorate" in English language from Leiden University. My academic title is the Dutch *Drs.* (Doctorandus), which corresponds to the American and British M.A. When I submitted my biodata to you, I wrote *Drs.*, but unfortunately this was taken to mean Dr. I wish it were right and I really had a doctorate, but I only have a doctorandus. I hope that this error can be corrected somehow.

Sincerely yours,
Batia Laufer
Department of
Foreign Language
University of Haifa

[Our apologies to Drs. Laufer for the error, and thanks for the corrective information. —ED.]

A Fifth Column for Sociolinguistics

Islamabad, Pakistan
30 March 1982

Dear Editor:

Wilga M. Rivers's article, "Psychology, Linguistics, and Language Teaching," in Forum (XX, 2) must have proved, as it has done in my case, very useful to language teachers. She is clear and lucid and, in attempting to review the developments over what will appear to most of us years of rapid changes in language pedagogy, she has been able to describe things with pragmatic objectivity. However, I believe the article is, as it were, mistitled. Its title fails to mention, along with psychology, sociology (or some related discipline), which has contributed equally significantly toward establishing current approaches in language teaching theory and methodology. The omission is strange in view of the fact that this article does refer adequately to various sociolinguistic developments.

What really makes me write you, however, is the fact that the nominal displacement of emphasis in the Rivers article is accompanied by editorial comments, in both the prefixed note and the editorial itself, that seem to support the potential lopsidedness rather too obviously. (The same approach is reflected in the four-pillar configuration on the cover.) Correct portioning out of emphasis among the different disciplines involved in TESOL is not, as it might seem to many, a question of academic punctiliousness; it is fairly important in the sense that very often slight imbalances of perspective of this nature have engendered tiny biases which it becomes difficult to outgrow in the long run—precisely for the reason that they are considered insignificant.

I think to treat sociolinguistics as a subtending area, particularly with regard to what has been going on during the last two decades, is most probably—perhaps certainly—less than fair. As a matter of fact, some very major approaches to this period, for instance the ones nicknamed communicative, have drawn directly upon a number of sociolinguistic, sociosemantic, psychosocial, anthropological, and ethnographic points of view. J.L. Austin, J.R. Searle, D.H. Hymes, J.J. Gumperz, M.A.K. Halliday, J.L.M. Trim, D.A. Wilkins, J. Munby, to mention but a few names, have all of them come forward with explanations that view the language learner as essentially constrained by sociolinguistic contexts of one sort or another. Purely linguistic and purely psychological angles, though extremely significant in their own right, very often tend to underestimate the sociological factors which actually go a long way toward determining the psychological ambience of language learning and use.

It is therefore tempting to suggest that you consider adding a "fifth column" to your TESOL colonnade, if only to acknowledge the presence of something which to many is the greatest factor of influence.

Respectfully,
Anjum P. Saleemi
The Department of English
Allama Iqbal Open University
H-8, Islamabad
Pakistan

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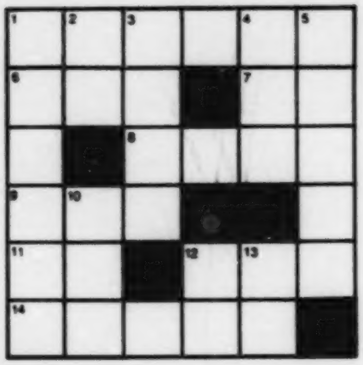
"The Lighter Side"



ACROSS
- 1 Volume number of this magazine
- 6 Feminine pronoun
- 7 Masculine pronoun
- 8 Thought; mental concept
- 9 Moved quickly
- 11 Chomsky's contribution (abbr.)
- 12 Possesses; owns
- 14 Not mine

DOWN
- 1 1 across plus ten
- 2 plural of "I"
- 3 Poetic term for Ireland
- 4 Article
- 5 12-month cycles
- 10 Time past
- 12 Sixty minutes (abbr.)
- 13 To the same amount or degree; at the same time; because; since, in the role or character of

SLIGHT FLIGHT

In earlier times, one form of the letter *s* used in writing and printing was a "long s": *ſ*. As you can see, it looked very much like the letter *f*, so that if it were used in writing the words defined in the left-hand column (all of which begin with *s*), each of those words would look like a word defined in the right-hand column, (all of which begin with *f*). How many of these *s-f* "minimal pairs" can you match up together? *Example*: 0-*l* (*slight-flight*).

s- Words
- 0 Small in amount; not important; slender
- 1 A number
- 2 An important part of a wind-driven boat
- 3 A noise; healthy
- 4 Vision; ability to see
- 5 Identical; alike
- 6 To take a seat
- 7 Took a seat; was seated
- 8 The hot, bright star around which the earth revolves
- 9 The part of a planet that can be sown to grow into a new plant; kernel; origin
- 10 Tricky; crafty; able to fool others
- 11 Tried to find; looked for

f- Words
- *a*. To nourish; give food to
- *b*. Big; thick; fleshy; full of oil
- *c*. To repair
- *d*. To move through the air by using wings, or in an airplane
- *e*. To be the right size; to be suitable
- *f*. To not succeed
- *g*. Did battle with
- *h*. Amusement; lively play or joking; a happy time
- *i*. Discovered
- *j*. Great reputation; the condition of being well known
- *k*. Battle
- *l*. The act of flying

FAUNA SAUNA

Here is a more advanced version of the *s/f* game. *Example*: Clue—*A steam bath for animals*. Answer: *Fauna sauna*.

- 1 A foolish horse
- 2 An unhappy trend
- 3 A black legend
- 4 A light-headed holy person
- 5 A light-shoe tosser
- 6 A tricky winged insect
- 7 Quick-moving icy rain
- 8 Opposite of the lost chord
- 9 A knighted evergreen tree
- 10 A thin strip of wood without humps
- 11 A trickier aviator
- 12 Not a fast stream

ANSWERS

Slight Flight: 1*c*: six-fix 2*f*: sail-fail 3*i*: sound-found 4*k*: sight-fight 5*j*: same-fame 6*e*: sit-fit 7*b*: sat-fat 8*h*: sun-fun 9*a*: seed-feed 10*d*: sly-fly 11*g*: sought-fought

Fauna Sauna 1. silly filly 2. sad fad 3. sable fable 4. faint saint 5. slipper flipper 6. sly fly 7. fleet sleet 8. found sound 9. sir fir 10. flat slat 11. slier flier (or slyer flyer) 12. slow flow